University of Alberta

Lyric Ethics: The Matter and Time of Ecopoetry

by

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For my family

ABSTRACT

This thesis intervenes in the burgeoning field of ecocriticism in order to critique the emphasis given to the complexities of place over time in environmental literature and to challenge the recourse to the aesthetics of realism that have determined the ethics of representation in ecopoetry. Moreover, by focusing on Canadian and American poets, it is the aim of this project to broaden the scope of ecocriticism beyond traditional national boundaries. This study argues that the structural relation of "metaphoricity," the articulatory dynamic between is/is not, constitutes an ethical relationship, understood in both spatial and temporal terms, between the human and non-human world.

By claiming that quantum mechanics reveals the metaphoricity that constitutes matter, the opening chapter "Lyric Matter" proposes that the ethical priority that is given to the equation between realism and materialism in ecocriticism undermines lyrical apprehensions of materiality that eschew linguistic totality. Rather, as the second chapter "The Matter of Poetry" points out, the metaphorical poems of Canadians Jan Zwicky and Don McKay, and American Jorie Graham, are examples of ethical attentiveness to this relational (linguistic/nonlinguistic) apprehension of matter, or "material metaphoricity." The third chapter "Lyric Ethics" challenges Emmanuel Levinas's opposition to metaphorical language by proposing that his ethics is lyrical because it is founded upon the dynamic of metaphoricity—the self and the other are articulated together, connected and yet distinct. Building on

temporal concerns in Levinas's ethics, the fourth chapter "Lyric Time" extends the discussion of metaphoricity to time from three related perspectives: geology, archives, and phenomenological time. As an attempt to correct the ecocritical subordination of time to place, this chapter argues for an "archival approach" to materiality that requires openness to the irreducible temporalities of "deep time." The last chapter "Archivists of the Elemental" examines works by the three poets that deal with time and elemental matter in order to argue that "wonder" (distinct from the sublime) is a form of metaphorical apprehension that opens one to the plurality and depth of time as well as to the "exemplarity" of matter, or the degree to which matter is beside itself, irreducible to language.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BT	Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time.*
EI	Lawrence Buell. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture.*
LP	Jan Zwicky. *Lyric Philosophy.*
OB	Emmanuel Levinas. *Otherwise than Being: Or Beyond Essence.*
PI	Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations.*
TA	Stephen Jay Gould. *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time.*
TI	Emmanuel Levinas. *Totality and Infinity.*
TO	Emmanuel Levinas. *Time and the Other.*
WE	Lawrence Buell. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond.*
WM	Jan Zwicky. *Wisdom and Metaphor.*

INTRODUCTION: Facing Lyric[1]

The tick is organically constructed in such a way that it finds its counterpoint in any mammal whatever that passes below its branch, as oak leaves arranged in the form of tiles find their counterpoint in the raindrops that stream over them. This is not a teleological conception but a melodic one in which we no longer know what is art and what nature...

(Gilles Deluze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*)

The idea of power as something to be 'exercised over' other things cannot arise within a lyric comprehension of the world.

(Jan Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*)

1. The Lookout

There is something that bothers me about looking at things—particularly those things that combine emotional resonance with significant physical settings. I am talking about the five weeks I spent in the Rocky Mountains trying to learn how to look at mountains; the three weeks I spent canoeing in the barren lands of the Northwest Territories amazed at moving in and out of the tree line; the snowstorms that descended on the different days we buried my grandparents; I am speaking about those things—sometimes far less significant than what I have just listed—that I try to remember, that I feel compelled to give shape to in my mind. What has become clear to me, however, is that, no matter how much I try, I cannot commit the contours of the thing, its setting, all of the physical attributes that have impressed me, to a specific memory, a specific time. I can never make what I see, or what I experience into an object in my mind easily available to later recall. I am sometimes even suspicious of my desire to achieve such a thing. How do we approach mountains, for example, without being crushed under the weight of the romantic sublime, or flippantly disengaged by ironic subversions of the experience? Why is it that I turn to poetry in the face of these kinds of reckonings? I have realized, however, that this impulse to give shape to things comes from wanting to find a way to stand in relation to matters and circumstances that is responsible to the ways in which they have intervened in my life, opened me to something larger than myself, made me reckon with difference. What does this orientation to things look like? What follows is an attempt to write the poetics of this relationship. The theory of lyric ethics that emerges in this work is an attempt to stand in relation to things, the environments, the elements of the world, that does not totalize materiality and that instead reveals the way in which the different times of things compels us to be responsible to a world that is too often reduced to the logic of commercial resource. What does it mean for one's sense of the world, for one's responsibility to it, to stand in relation to a mountain that was once a seafloor? How does one hold such things in the mind? Not as objects, but as matters and times of lyric.

2. The Outlook

The question of the constitution and genealogy of lyric is a vexing one. There is little agreement, especially when it comes to contemporary manifestations, about what exactly makes a lyric poem, or about the historical trajectories from whence it has emerged. In a book dedicated to investigating these questions, *New Definitions of Lyric*, Mark Jeffreys notes in his introduction that, in light of the essays in the collection, "no one seems precisely sure of what the exact components of the 'traditional' or 'romantic' lyric are or when they were fixed in place" (ix). There are those in the collection, such as Dorothy Nielsen, who argue for recognizing the original connection between lyric and voice, between lyric and the matter of the body, which stands opposed to conceptions of lyric, proposed by Marjorie Perloff in her response to the essays, that see lyric as divorced from urgent matters and times (129, 253). Inevitably, Jeffreys acknowledges, the claims for lyric and the claims made against it are shaped by partisan views about what formal and rhetorical concerns contemporary poetry, specifically American, should pursue.[2]

What is important about these disagreements and difficulties surrounding the definition and history of lyric is that they reveal the lyric materiality and the lyric temporality of lyric itself. Lyric is not one thing, nor does it have a single history. This is consistent with the very relational dynamic that is enacted by lyric apprehensions of the world. What do I mean by this? I want to understand lyric not simply as a kind of poem, but as a way of apprehending the world, a kind of attention, a form of being in relation; it is a relational dynamic structured in the terms of what I call metaphoricity. That is to say, I want to extend the relationship expressed in metaphor—a relationship where divergent contexts are brought into resonant relationship, and are also held distinctly apart (something both "is" and "is not" in any metaphorical assertion)—to the larger realms of social, material, and temporal relations. Indeed, I conceive of this relationship, this articulatory dynamic where connectedness is posited at the same time as distinctness (is/is not) as an example of ethical relations, as an example of what I will call lyric ethics.

By lyric I do not mean simply a short meditative poem "full of physically apprehended details of perception and sensuous rhythms" (Barbour 18).[3] Rather, my employment of the term is closer to Jan Zwicky's discussion of "lyric speech" in *Lyric Philosophy*. Zwicky understands lyric speech as enacting "an integration sustained by a desire whose fulfillment is impossible" (L134). That is, ineffable lyric thought is given imperfect but necessary expression in the language of lyric art. It is metaphor that serves as the locus for this "domestication" of lyric thought.[4] By lyric, then, I mean lyric art, and I mean more specifically the relational dynamic of metaphoricity that is operative in lyric art—the hinge between language-dependant thinking and non-linguistic apprehensions of the world. Moreover, as Zwicky observes in her essay "Bringhurst's Presocratics: Lyric and Ecology," lyric has an ecological structure inasmuch as it integrates the opposing forces of wordlessness and "various human modes of understanding—emotional, logical, physical, among others" (110). Thus, the dynamic of metaphoricity, its hinge, the articulatory dynamic that integrates its components and yet upholds their distinctness is an ecology precisely because of its capacity to preserve difference in community, to preserve the particularities of things in their larger contextual relationships.

I have several related aims in this project. While I spend considerable time arguing for ways to consider lyric, matter, temporality, ethics and ecocriticism, and while my discussion of specific poems is largely confined to two chapters, I consider this entire project to be about poetry—it is about poetry as a way of apprehending things, a way of thinking ethically. It is my aim to illustrate how poetry, specifically lyric metaphoricity, is involved in virtually all of the issues that I come to consider. In his essay "So Big About Green" Laurie Ricou encourages the ecocritic to become familiar with the other languages and attentions of scientific understanding in order to extend the interdisciplinary reach of ecocritical studies (6). As a commitment to this, I move in this project among scientific theories of quantum materiality, and among geological approaches to the question of the "deep time" of the fossil record. In addition, by metaphorically extending the reach of this inquiry to related philosophical discussions of ethics, archives, wondering, and elements, it is my aim to enact an ecological engagement (at once interruptive and interdependent) with the wider environment of what might constitute poetic approaches to the world and what might constitute the world as a consequence of poetry.

It is also my aim in this project to address the ways in which poetry has been misread or misapprehended by many ecocritics. To judge environmentally concerned and metaphorically rich ecopoetry[5] according to its realist, mimetic, and representational virtues, rather than by the relational dynamics that it presupposes in its metaphorical engagements with the environment, is to treat this kind of poetry as a language-dependent literal enterprise. It is precisely the metaphorical dynamic of lyric engagements with the environment that expresses a lyric ethics where matter is apprehended in terms that escape our linguistic systems. By focusing on realism and the faithfulness of mimetic representation, ecocritics risk marginalizing lyrical approaches to the natural world that provide an alternative way of thinking ethics. The poetry of Jan Zwicky, Don McKay, and Jorie Graham is important to this project because all three writers are engaged in a metaphorical, lyrical poetics that is concerned with matter and time as expressed in landscape, archives, and the elemental. Not only do these poets deserve greater ecocritical attention, but by focusing on Canadian and American poets together it is my goal to cross the national boundaries that have typically framed ecocritical investigations.

In addition, I wish to say something about the relationship between poetry and materiality, as well as poetry and temporality. I begin this project with the question of matter. By considering quantum mechanical dilemmas that employ metaphor as a way of conceiving of materiality itself, I suggest the dynamic of metaphoricity is involved in the very constitution of matter. By critiquing the ecocritical emphasis on realism, I propose that lyric ethics, emerging as it does from a metaphorical poetic, proposes a materiality that is beside itself, that emphasizes a relationship of pure potential. I use the term "material metaphoricity" to describe this relational apprehension of matter. I turn to the poetry of Zwicky, McKay, and Graham in order to illustrate examples of material metaphoricity. I am interested in the works of these three poets in the context of environmental ethics for the potential relations with the world and with language that they enact in their formal metaphoric properties.

In the middle of this project, its ecological centre, its hinge, I deal with question of lyric ethics directly. I approach it largely from the perspective of ethical literary criticism and from the perspective of the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel

Levinas. I have arranged my discussion with the intention of placing this explanation of lyric ethics in the middle in order to structurally enact the dynamic of metaphoricity that inhabits this work. Here, between the issues of matter and time and their relationship to the works of the three poets, is an examination of lyric ethics in the context of ethics. Levinas is important here because he provides, as I argue, an example of an ethical philosophy built on metaphoricity—the articulatory dynamic of the face to face encounter. One of the primary objectives of this project is to present an interpretation of Levinas's work—in light of metaphor and environmental ethics—that has not been previously considered. Levinas functions in this project much like the three poets inasmuch as he is an "example" of various aspects of lyric ethics. As I explain in chapter two, the poets are "exemplary" for my purposes in the way that Giorgio Agamben theorizes the example: an example is always beside itself; its reality is adjacent to its exemplarity. Levinas and the poets, then, are not employed as objects pressed into systematic service. Rather, they are examples ecologically engaged with my own arguments, which at times means they do not perfectly fit. This is especially the case with Levinas and his stated difficulties with metaphor and with non-anthropocentric perspectives; however, my agreements with Levinas in combination with my differences from him enact the articulatory is/is not dynamic that is intrinsic to lyric ethics.

Levinas raises the question of time in combination with the question of matter in the context of ethics. This makes a necessary bridge to the final section of this project which deals with the relationship between metaphor and time. I propose that metaphor is not only intimately involved with our attempts to understand time, but is also a function of our responsible experience of time. I approach the metaphoricity of temporality from three related perspectives: geological deep time, the structure of archives, and the phenomenological experience of time. Ecocriticism is very much engaged with an archival recuperation of nature writing; however, time is often subordinated to place in ecocritical studies. As an attempt to address this oversight, I engage the complex issues of temporality as these relate to the poetry of Zwicky, McKay, and Graham and their explicit interest in the metaphoricity of geological time and archival encounters with the elemental.

Lyric ethics engages the question of time (so often overlooked by ecocritics) through the apprehension of lyric time and its dynamic of temporal metaphoricity (the is/is not structure of a plurality of times hinged together). In the context of metaphor and time, I also argue for the role of wonder (as distinct from the sublime). Wonder is a metaphorical dynamic (and an example of ethics in terms of the "epiphany" of the face to face encounter) that opens one to the plurality and depth of time. Thus, wondering at the archive of nature (that is, being open to the natural world as an archival encounter) is to be in an ethical relation, it is to face the deep time of the elemental other. Lyric ethics involves being open (through wonder made possible by archival attentiveness—as demonstrated by the three poets) to the relational materiality of the natural world, it is opening ourselves to the different times of the world in a way that brings the world before our existence and after our existence into the realm of our responsibility.

In *The Gay]Grey Moose*, D.M.R. Bentley argues for an ecological poetics that is consistent with how I propose to understand lyric ethics. Bentley is interested in a poetics that "elaborates on two key ecological assumptions—the assumption that man and nature are a 'community of interdependent parts' and the assumption that 'diversity' in the human and natural world must be safeguarded and fostered" (274). The dual emphasis on "community" and "diversity" is consistent with the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity that simultaneously hinges interdependence and distinctness—the value of thinking the apprehension of things in the terms of metaphoricity, as I have been describing, is that it presupposes the recognition that things are connected to other things, to larger resonant contexts, and yet also distinct matters and times unto themselves.

Moreover, Bentley is interested in a poetics that moves between the systematic limitations of critical theories that stress language over all other issues, and critical practices that wholly exclude vexing linguistic concerns in favour of abstract templates of understanding. What Bentley calls for is an ecological approach that considers the physical and verbal aspects of poetry: "ideally, its aim is to stress and examine their interdependence" (275). Similarly, in "So Big About Green," Ricou asks: "Can the infinite deferrals of a post-structuralist view of language engage the infinite interdependencies of an ecological system? Or is a philosophy of language as a referential system essential to eco-criticism?" (5). It is my aim in this project to argue for the role of metaphoricity, in its dynamic capacity as an apprehension of materiality and temporality, as a middle way between these two extremes. By involving language and the non-linguistic world I wish to argue that metaphor engages both deferrals and interdependencies; it forces us to reckon at once with the limitations of our linguistic engagement with the referential world and with our inevitable recourse to language as part of our capacity to make sense of the world. The relationship between language-dependent and non-linguistic thinking that takes place in the metaphoricity of lyric ethics is both a reckoning with the world of language and with the world as it escapes linguistic systematization.

In developing his remarks about an ecological poetics, Bentley points out that "It is essential that we ask spatial and sensual as well as intellectual and temporal questions about the poems that we read" (276). It is my aim to do just this in my project. By focusing on the way in which poetry (its lyrical, metaphorical dynamics) is operative in our ethical conceptions of both space and time I wish to stress the importance of not only looking at poems, but *as* poems. That is, approaching the environment in the terms of metaphoricity offers us a way to think our relation to the world, and indeed the world itself, otherwise. Lyric ethics provides a way for us to apprehend our own responsibility to the spaces and times of the world around us and also to apprehend how that responsibility extends to the deep histories and far futures that escape our conceptions but weigh on us, and call to us as imperatives to be more than human.

Notes

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[1] Some of the material below has been previously published in the following: "An interview with Adam Dickinson." *Contemporary Verse 2*. 25.3 (2003): 36-42.

[2] The conflict in the United States between more radical poetics such as language poetry and what might be termed more "mainstream" lyric poetry does not have the same bellicose tone in Canada. Douglas Barbour has observed the degree to which Canadian poets engage one another across this divide, making the partisan distinctions between the aesthetic camps less pronounced in Canada. Indeed, one could argue that there is more of an ecological relationship among poetic traditions in the Canadian context.

[3] In *Lyric/Anti-lyric* Douglas Barbour explores examples of contemporary poetry that express a tension between traditional lyrical resources and subversions of those resources. In the work of John Newlove, Robert Creeley, Phyllis Webb, and Anne Carson, among others, Barbour identifies a poetics that complicates the conventional short meditation on the details of a perceptive consciousness and renounces the egocentricity of the lyrical "I" while at the same time employing the metaphorical music of lyricism. I wish to claim, however, that the operative dynamic of lyric, the hinge between "is" and "is not" in the dynamic of metaphoricity, might be considered an expression of lyric/anti-lyric. Thus, the poets that I explore in this project are lyric poets precisely because their lyricism engages the articulatory dynamic of positing a lyricism that undoes itself as a closed, classical category. In this way, these poets (or at least the aspects of their work that I discuss) might be understood to fit into the lyric/anti-lyric dynamic that Barbour examines.

[4] "Domesticity" is that which mediates the wordlessness of lyric to the systematic linguistic thinking of "technology." Domesticity is quite simply both an acknowledgment and respect for difference, for the different orders of other things (see *Lyric Philosophy* L244, L254).

[5] Ecopoetry is, as J. Scott Bryson points out in his Introduction to *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction*, a fluid and malleable term. It has, however, come to be used more consistently than other terms that perhaps more awkwardly describe poetry that deals with the environment in a self-conscious and thoughtful way. For Bryson, ecopoetry has three central characteristics: "ecocentrism, a humble appreciation of wildness, and a skepticism toward hyperrationality and its resultant overreliance on technology" (7).

1. LYRIC MATTER[1]

In the beginning is the relation.

(Martin Buber, *I And Thou*)

1. The Matter of Lyric

Quantum theory thus provides us with a striking illustration of the fact that we can fully understand a connection though we can only speak of it in images and parables.

(Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond*)

In 1935 quantum physicist Erwin Schrödinger published an essay describing what he took to be conceptual problems with Werner Heisenberg's indeterminacy principal. Schrödinger was attempting to critique the quantum mechanical contention that microscopic quantum particles such as atoms could be in two or more states at the same time by extending this principle to a macroscopic object—in this case, a cat. "Schrödinger's cat," as his thought experiment has come to be called, elucidates a paradox central to conceptions of materiality in quantum mechanics. The predicament of Schrödinger's cat unfolds as follows: a cat is placed in a steel chamber along with a Geiger counter containing a small amount of radioactive substance. The substance is so small that over the course of an hour it is possible that a single atom will decay; equally possible is that none of the substance will break down. If in fact an atom decays then this is detected by the Geiger counter which is set to release a hammer against a flask containing hydrocyanic acid. If the whole contraption is left for an hour (and the cat does not interfere with the "diabolical device") there is an equal chance that the cat will be dead or alive. Schrödinger explains it thus: "The ψ-function of the entire system would express this by having in it the living and the dead cat (pardon the expression) mixed or smeared out in equal parts" (157). Consequently, the cat, in the terms of quantum mechanics, is both dead and alive at the same time before one opens the lid and the system is forced into one measurement or the other. Schrödinger fully acknowledges the counter intuitive nature of this conclusion; it is, however, a paradox that remains puzzling to physicists.

Schrödinger's cat is relevant to my discussion about environmental ethics and poetry for three reasons. First, Schrödinger's investigation into the materiality of macroscopic circumstances involves an image, a model, a lyrically metaphorical construction; metaphor is his conceptual access to materiality. Second, the materiality of the cat is hinged between living and dying, caught, in other words, in an ontological ambivalence: "is" and "is not." I see metaphor, or more specifically, the relational dynamic of metaphoricity, which will become more thoroughly developed throughout my discussion, as an "articulation," as a hinge between the objective, binary realms of "is" and "is not." I understand articulation here as a hinge, as at once a breaking and a joining, or as Giorgio Agamben defines it: "a laceration that is also a suture" (*Stanzas* 157). Jacques Derrida employs the term "articulation" in much the same way in *Of Grammatology* as part of his discussion of *La Brisure*, or the hinge (65). Thus, the materiality of Schrödinger's cat is metaphorical not simply in its rhetorical employment, but more significantly as a consequence of its substantive state and the relational dynamic expressed therein. The dead and alive cat is important to me for a third reason: it underscores the difficulty with which realism apprehends materiality, which has consequences for how we might think the ethical implications of poetry's lyrical engagement with the natural world.

It was Schrödinger's intention to send up the absurdity of the indeterminacy principle. Quantum mechanics works very well at the microscopic level where waves can be in two places at once; however, the "material metaphoricity" of a larger object—his cat—has remained a quantum mechanical dilemma. Rather than exposing to ridicule a model of materiality founded on un-reality, Schrödinger's thought experiment has succeeded in provoking further research to support a view of matter hinged between paradoxical states. Consider, for example, a study published in *Nature* in 2000 where a team of scientists claimed to have demonstrated through experimentation with superconducting materials a Schrödinger-cat-like state at a macroscopic level (Freidman 43). What Schrödinger had depicted as the epitome of un-reality has been thrown into doubt by this experiment. What is reality? What is matter?[2]

Let me make the jump that Schrödinger makes from the microscopic to the macroscopic in considering these questions. If metaphorical thinking and metaphorical relational dynamics are involved with thinking the reality of matter in quantum mechanics, then what role does metaphor, lyrical thinking, play in larger apprehensions of materiality; that is to say, what role does metaphor play in thinking our environment? More specifically, what role does the metaphoricity of lyric art, for example, play in thinking environmental ethics? How can artists who depict the natural world in paint, or in words, make ethical claims for their work? Consider, for example, a discussion about environmental damage to the oceans recorded by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in May 2004, where the natural historian and marine artist Richard Ellis commented that he preferred to express his respect for fish by painting their portraits rather than catching them and mounting them on walls. Ellis is perhaps best known for his 1976 work *The Book of Sharks* (republished and reprinted numerous times), which is filled with his own realist depictions of these marine predators. In a prefatory section to the book entitled "Confessions of a Shark Painter," Ellis discusses his developing interest in sharks as being primarily representational; shape, form, and the complexity of silhouettes were his original fascinations (16,17). He admits that his aim as a painter is to show sharks in their "*modus vivendi*," in their real, deep sea settings devoid of background details that would suggest any complicity with popular sensational, fictional representations of the creatures (19). The reality of a featureless background, however, meant that Ellis constantly encountered the problem of scale in depicting such a wide variety of sharks. He tried everything, he writes, "but the only object that everyone knows the size of is a human being. Coral, boats, other fishes—all these are variables, and there is no way of guaranteeing that the viewer will know their size" (19). His solution was occasionally to insert an imagined diver to contrast with the size of the shark. This solution, however, is somewhat at odds with Ellis's stated intention to avoid emphasizing popular fears of sharks—his divers often look vulnerable and frightened in the face of a menacing giant. These imagined divers serve to infuse drama into the scene, to evoke a potentially lyrical back story (what is the diver doing there anyway?) that both is and is not part of the reality of the shark. That is to say, the diver and shark may well encounter each other in such a way, but this is by no means the usual, pelagic reality of a shark's environment. In order to represent the realistic dimension of size, Ellis is forced to court imagined and mythic associations.

Ellis's dilemma is instructive for two reasons. First, it reinforces the difficulty of making the environment fully present in a realist depiction. It is not enough simply to present the image of the shark in its natural setting; the imagined diver, as a kind of figural intervention, conveys the sense of scale that is lost in the reality of the featureless background. Second, because, as he states in his interview, Ellis considers his portraits to be a form of respect, his paintings are an example of an artistic response to the environment self-consciously seen as an ethical relation. However, given that certain imaginative adjustments are required to render reality in the painting, to what degree does the faithfulness of literal representation reflect an ethical response to the other reality of the nonhuman? To what degree are realism, reference, and assumptions about the nature of materiality (or the materiality of nature) dependent on imaginative, lyrical, metaphorical interventions?

The burgeoning field of ecocriticism often privileges representations that offer direct reference to environmental crisis, or, more generally, writing with a readily identifiable activist dimension. That is to say, poets that foreground explicit environmental concerns, such as A.R. Ammons, Wendell Berry, W.S. Merwin, and

Gary Snyder, are frequently (and quite appropriately) the objects of ecocritical inquiries. This referential attention to the pressing reality of the environmental crisis is even written into definitions of ecocriticism (which is to be "conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis" according to Lawrence Buell) and "ecopoetry" or the "ecological poem" (which presuppose activist attention to the looming fragility of the environment according to Leonard Scigaj and David W. Gilcrest).[3] More oblique approaches to environmental issues in works that attempt to call language and reference into question are often charged (especially by Scigaj) with being overly-theoretical or anthropocentrically self-indulgent. Among prominent ecocritics, particularly Lawrence Buell, the emphasis on a realist aesthetic is, I argue, a view of poetry that is opposed to interests in metaphor as expressed in the works of Canadian poets Jan Zwicky and Don McKay and American poet Jorie Graham. Indeed, it is also a view that threatens to marginalize lyrical approaches to the natural world that provide an alternative way of thinking ethics, a way that points to a potential political activism, but not in the terms of any systematic methodology.

The question of environmental ethics begins with the question of matter. It is the relationship between lyric and matter and the ethical consequences therein that concern this chapter. In light of my introductory meditation on Schrödinger's cat, I begin by describing briefly the vexed relationship between metaphor, realism and the question of materiality in quantum mechanics in order to emphasize that the "reality" of matter is both metaphorically conceived and metaphorically constituted (as a consequence of being relational). Next I argue for how I want to understand metaphor, for why current taxonomical enterprises that seek to account for metaphor are grounded in the assumptions of systematic linguistic thinking. Following this I argue for why metaphor can be considered a social structure and not simply a rhetorical device. In making this argument I expose certain restrictive poststructural assumptions about metaphor that I think are shared by ecocritical approaches to and employments of metaphor. As I examine next, many of these restrictive ecocritical approaches to metaphor are bound up with an investment in realism. I go on to suggest that the terms of engagement with the world that ecocriticism calls for, be they artistic or pragmatic, are far more ethically rendered in a lyrical, or more specifically, metaphorical approach to matter (apprehended as material metaphoricity); I call this approach "lyric ethics." My understanding of lyric is informed by Zwicky's writings in *Lyric Philosophy*, but I use the term in a more specific way. When I talk about "lyric," I do not mean, as Zwicky understands it, the pure desire for wordlessness, rather I mean lyric art, and specifically metaphoricity, which reveals itself as an articulation (that is, as I discussed, a breaking and a joining—a hinge) between presence and absence, or language and non-language, or logic and illogic.[4] It is metaphoricity that is the operative, relational dynamic within figurative language. It is metaphoricity, as a relational potential, that allows us to think of an environmental ethic at work in lyric apprehensions of materiality in the poetry of Zwicky, McKay, and Graham that I discuss in Chapter Two.

2. In the Beginning

Envoi (To Begin With)

There is no real
world, my friends.
Why not, then,
let the stars
shine in our bones

(Robert Kroetsch, *Completed Field Notes*)

The connection between metaphor and matter goes back to the distant origins of Western science and philosophy. The atom as a model for a view of matter composed of elemental and indivisible particles can be traced back all the way to the fifth century BC and the Greek philosophers Leucippus and Democritus. Atomism was developed by Democritus into a mechanistic materialist view of matter where all phenomena were governed by systematic causes such as atomic force or weight. The difficulty, however, in proving the existence of these infinitesimal particles and their mechanistic forces provoked followers of Democritus, such as his disciple Pyrrho, to embrace scepticism, to submit that knowledge of materiality is ultimately unattainable. While there was resistance to atomic theories in classical antiquity, notably from Platonists, and Aristotelians, who believed that rational intention governed worldly processes, the theory received important support over the years from Epicurus (300 BC) and the Roman poet Lucretius (65 BC) with his poem "De Rerum Natura" ("On the Nature of Things"). The fact that the atom remained empirically inaccessible ensured that the idea itself was "purely philosophical" (Dahl 2). It was also, however, unquestionably metaphorical.

There have been a number of studies that have examined the role of metaphor in scientific inquiry (Theodore L. Brown, *Making Truth: Metaphor in Science*; Sandro Petruccioli, *Atoms, Metaphors and Paradoxes*; Thomas S. Kuhn, "Metaphor in Science," to name but a few). It goes without saying that the reliance on models and theoretical hypotheses in scientific enterprises requires at least a certain amount of metaphorical intervention. For a scientist to talk about a novel concept he or she is often forced to inhabit the limits of linguistic expression, required to reach for images and analogical descriptions. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that metaphor has so intimately inhabited scientific discussions about materiality. However, I want to make an important distinction: it is my belief that atomic theories are not simply the product of metaphors, as Theodore L. Brown contends in his book *Making Truth*; that is to say, they are not simply the product of seeing love or strife in the context of the natural attraction and repulsion of substances, or conceptualizing causation as a material thing (54). Rather, the development of atomic theories provides a model of materiality based on metaphoricity, on its articulatory dynamic. This is most specifically the case in quantum understandings of the atom, where the model of materiality is one based not on an indivisible, corpuscular view of the atom, but rather on articulation. I have already mentioned Schrödinger's cat as an example of hinged ontological ambivalence. Consider also the logical quandary of the fact that the quantum model of the atom has at its origins an unresolved duality between wave and particle. Moreover, there is indeterminacy at the very foundation of these wave-like particles, for, as David J. Griffiths notes in *Introduction to Quantum Mechanics*, "even if you know everything the theory has to tell you about the particle (to wit: its wave function), you cannot predict with certainty the outcome of a simple experiment to measure its position—all quantum mechanics has to offer is *statistical* information about the *possible* results" (3). Is this the breakdown of measurement, of theory?

The quantum model of the atom forces us to think differently about what it means to have a theory and what it means to measure. Theodore L. Brown contends that "Quantum theory created a sense of crisis in physics because it meant that the behaviour of atomic—and subatomic—level systems could not be understood entirely in terms of metaphors drawn from experience with the macroscopic world" (88). On the contrary I would suggest that quantum theory, for precisely the logically vexing reasons I have underscored above, provokes us to think metaphorically. The systematic mapping from target domains to source domains that Brown and others have bought into as an explanation for metaphor in the sciences is based on a conceptual theory of metaphor (endorsed in particular by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson) that attempts to systematically account for the analogical substitutions that occur in "everyday" metaphors.[5] Brown sees quantum theory as a crisis of metaphor because there are no logical substitutions to be made in any analogical reasoning. The problem with this argument is that it assumes a systematic logic of substitution in metaphor. Metaphor is not reducible to systematic logic; its articulatory dynamic is not consistent with discrete logical parameters. Thus, the fact that the quantum model presents us with the limits of description, with the limits of analogy is entirely consistent with the kind of thinking that enacts metaphor—there are no ready-made domains in language that can be summoned to explain the quantum atom. Moreover, because it is impossible to accurately measure the location of a particle, measurement itself—that most systematic of enterprises—is implicated in experimental uncertainty. Indeed, as a consequence, there is no clear consensus among scientists about what quantum mechanics really does or what it means: "Every competent physicist can 'do' quantum mechanics, but the stories we tell ourselves about what we are doing are as various as the tales of Scheherazade, and almost as implausible" (Griffiths vii). Similarly, attempts to describe the process and behaviour of metaphor resist analytic explanations. I see the situation of quantum mechanics as an example of metaphoricity not because of its relativism but because it underscores the different kind of thinking that quantum physics requires of its practitioners. While tidy images and models already available in the linguistic social context may not immediately spring to mind, scientists are still doing the work of thinking "is" and "is not," of thinking extra-linguistically; that is to say, outside of the systems of linguistic meaning. This is not a crisis of metaphor, but an acknowledged reckoning with material metaphoricity—both in substance and in thinking.

The difficulties that the quantum mechanical model presents to traditional notions of matter and measurement underscore the difficulty with which realism apprehends materiality. That is to say, quantum mechanics makes it difficult to talk about the real world as an objectively stable and knowable entity. There are those, such as physicist Sheldon Glashow, who maintain a strong realist position in the face of quantum mechanical uncertainties by asserting "that there are eternal, objective, ahistorical, socially neutral, external and universal truths" in science (Brown 187). For realists such as this quantum mechanics is an incomplete theory; it has not succeeded in accounting for all of the information necessary to determine the complete physical reality of any one particle. Then, there are anti-realists, such as John Foster, who claim that the physical world cannot be a part of any "ultimate reality"; Foster builds a case for an idealistic approach to space and materiality (Dainton 232). If the theory is incomplete or if there is no ultimate non-mental purchase from which to speak about the world, then how does quantum mechanics talk about reality? How does it represent the world to itself?

Quantum mechanics has a vexed relationship with its imagery. In his book *Toy Medium* Daniel Tiffany argues that "the crisis of visualization" that emerged in quantum physics "was not so much a conflict between advocating or rejecting intuitive pictures, in any absolute sense, as a heated philosophical debate about what *kind* of pictures were appropriate" (262). Tiffany points out further that "The images of material substance composed (sometimes reluctantly) by quantum theorists are not reproductions, then, but *tools*, or as Erwin Schrödinger called them, *allegories*" (262). Schrödinger's cat, Neils Bohr's diagrams, and Richard Feynman's pictures are all images that usefully, dynamically engage material reality. But if there are images at the foundation of thinking about the world of things, then upon what ground does the realist stand in the quantum model? Tiffany argues that quantum mechanical theory required images in order to constitute a new reality. In fact, following Ian Hacking's claims that "the real [is] an attribute of representations" (136), Tiffany claims that scientific materialism, throughout its atomistic development, has depended on an equation between images and realism. Countering the historical atomist equation between materialism and realism, the crisis of representation in quantum physics exposes the fact that "*materialism is not inherently realistic*" (Tiffany 268). This is important to my discussion for two reasons: first, as I have been arguing, poetry, lyrical thinking, metaphor can play a role in conceptualizing materiality; second, to extend Tiffany's argument, I think the equation between realism and materialism is an underlying assumption of ecocriticism and its interests in the real world of nature. The ethical priority that is given to this equation undermines lyrical apprehensions of materiality that propose a different approach to environmental ethics. I address this issue in the context of ecocriticism presently; first, however, I want to be clear on how I am employing metaphor as a lyrical dynamic.

3. What I Talk About When I Talk About Metaphor

(With apologies to Raymond Carver)

My primary interest is metaphoricity, which I understand to be the relational dynamic of metaphor. I begin by describing the resonant structure of metaphoricity and then extend that description to lyric poetry in general, which I argue formally expresses the articulatory relational dynamic of metaphoricity. Next I contend that metaphorical thinking is a species of non-linguistic thinking, but not in the way that conceptual theories of metaphor make this claim. The non-linguistic claims made of conceptual metaphor by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson presuppose a reliance on the logic of linguistic thinking.

To begin with, let me say that I am less interested in any one metaphor than I am in the relational dynamic that metaphor as a figurative device presents. This relational potential of metaphor, its structural dynamic, is metaphoricity. I aim in this project to develop an understanding of metaphor that is inflected and developed through each successive chapter. Anything I say at this moment is simply notes toward this larger, resonant understanding. In *Lyric Philosophy* Zwicky speaks of resonance thus: "In a polydimensional structure, integrated components may transmit motion to one another. Under certain conditions of attunement, a resonance-body is formed" (L6). Think of resonance in the musical sense, with overtones, harmonies—notes that sound in the harmonics of other notes. Attention to metaphoricity is attention to the resonant structure of metaphor; the components work as an articulated whole where they are held in relation without fusion. Metaphoricity has a fundamentally articulatory structure. That is, as a consequence of being resonant, the distinctness of parts is emphasized in their larger, integral connection.

Metaphorical articulations, such as that between the "is" and "is not" as theorized by Paul Ricoeur, are easily extended, I would argue, to the larger poetic dynamic of the lyric. Daniel Tiffany locates lyric as the oscillation between the real and the unreal; Giorgio Agamben similarly connects poetry to the interplay between presence and absence; Paul de Man notes the ambivalence between representational and non-representational language in lyric poetry (he also points to lyric poetry's ambivalent relationship with time—it does not proceed according to a linear history); Theodor Adorno considers the engagement with and antagonism to society that is operative within the lyric; Wallace Stevens theorizes the articulation between reality and the imagination in his prose writings about poetry; Robert Frost argues that confusion along with a "momentary stay against confusion" is the metaphorical basis of all poetry ("Figure" 18).[6] I want to suggest in light of these articulations that metaphoricity is expressed in the structural relations not simply of metaphor but also of lyric poetry itself. Thus, when I talk about lyric matter and lyric ethics and lyric time I am emphasizing the metaphoricity of their relational dynamics.

Metaphor is a way of thinking rather than a way of adorning rhetorical language. This is not necessarily news. However, the emphasis in analytic studies of metaphor has traditionally been on its linguistic function; here I am thinking of I.A. Richards and his interests in the tenor and vehicle as syntactical transfers of meaning; Nelson Goodman regards metaphor (albeit metaphorically) as "an affair between a predicate with a past and an object that yields while protesting" (24); Monroe Beardsley stresses the sentence rather than the word as the vehicle of meaning; Max Black's "interaction" theory of metaphor focuses on unusual semantic employment of words or phrases. Despite this interest in the linguistic grammar of metaphorical expressions, there has been an attempt to understand metaphor as a species of non-linguistic thought. For example, in their influential book *Metaphors We Live By* George Lakoff and Mark Johnson contend that metaphor is so pervasive in our thought, that "our ordinary conceptual system…is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (3). Indeed, Lakoff goes even further in his essay "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor" by asserting that "the locus of metaphor is not in language at all," but in thought (203). Similarly, Zwicky, in her book *Wisdom and Metaphor*, maintains that metaphor as such is non-linguistic. That is, it is a form of non-linguistic thought that takes the shape of what we recognize as a "metaphor" when expressed in language. "Metaphors," Zwicky writes in Wittgensteinian terms, "are one way of expressing insights whose *form* prevents expression *in* a language-game" (*WM* L19).[7] In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein describes language-games as the unspoken, situationally specific rules that subtend a context of linguistic interaction. Language-games themselves make up the cultural fabric of what he calls a "form of life," which is the larger network of rules and conventions that underlie a society. For Zwicky, metaphor interrupts the boundaries of language-games by revealing the simultaneity of roles that words or concepts play in different linguistic situations.

Zwicky's understanding of metaphor as non-linguistic is, I would argue, markedly different from Lakoff and Johnson's, and this difference is instructive in terms of my notion of metaphoricity. The relational dynamic of metaphoricity is not operative in the terms of linguistic logic. The conceptual theory of metaphor proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, despite its interest in metaphorical thinking, is a species of linguistic logic for two reasons: it relies on conventional language-games and on systematic interpretation. The theory relies on conventional language-games because the explicit aim of *Metaphors We Live By* is to expose the metaphors that inhabit our everyday discursive circumstances—those situations that are commonplace linguistic experiences, the sort Wittgenstein associates with language-games (*PI* 5). There is, consequently, no attempt to interrupt or connect between different language-games; they are simply identified with their elemental metaphors (love is madness, ideas are fashion, etc). Metaphor, in Zwicky's interpretation, interrupts the everyday language-games of reference and communication; it creates an ecology between contexts, an articulation, creating a gestalt shift that facilitates "seeing as": this is the nature of understanding for Zwicky and it is not reducible to systematic logic.[8]

Lakoff and Johnson begin *Metaphors We Live By* with the example that an argument can be systematically approached as a metaphor for war: "The fact that we in part conceptualize arguments in terms of battle systematically influences the shape arguments take and the way we talk about what we do in arguing. Because the metaphorical concept is systematic, the language we use to talk about that aspect of the concept is systematic" (7). There is much in Lakoff and Johnson's approach to metaphor that relies on systematic interpretation. They frequently attempt to reduce metaphors to a series of elemental quanta: ideas are objects, linguistic expressions are containers, communication is sending, to name but a few. I would argue that this view of metaphor is at odds with Zwicky's decidedly non-systematic take. In fact system for her is evidence of closed linguistic thinking. She notes in her essay "Dream Logic and the Politics of Interpretation," that "there are two distinct *logoi* operating in human mental activity, of which we are, at different times and variously, conscious and unconscious. These two *logoi* – the one informing dreams, slips of the tongue, jokes and neurotic symptoms, the other informing 'normal' waking thought – Freud called, respectively, primary and secondary process" (127). Primary process involves thinking by association, outside of the logic of language-dependent thinking whereas secondary process is a form of totalized, closed thinking that "recognizes, and operates according to, linear orders in space and time, and adheres to the standard inference patterns of basic logic" (129). Zwicky argues that primary process (dreams, the getting-of-jokes, etc.) is a legitimate form of thinking that does not require interpretation as such; rather, it is for political reasons that the apparatus of analysis, the application of secondary process thinking, is used to generate translations. In refusing the apparent vagaries of primary process, in imposing linguistic translations on perfectly meaningful thought, philosophy boxes itself into the practice of "rigorously mechanical analyses" (140). Lakoff and Johnson's emphasis on mapping between source and target domains and their attempts to compile a taxonomy of foundational metaphors (even in their treatments of poetic metaphor in *More Than Cool Reason*) result in a systematic approach to metaphor that, despite their non-linguistic claims, re-inscribes the logic of linguistic thinking.

Zwicky's thinking about metaphor and lyric is very important to me for several key reasons. When I associate materialist logic with linguistic thinking it is secondary process as a species of analytic logic, as a form of totalized thinking "predicated on a fundamental distinction between self and non-self" that I have in mind (Zwicky, "Dream" 129). When I see matter as, ethics as, time as metaphoricity

I am doing so in sympathy with Zwicky's notion that understanding involves "seeing as"; it "is always the experience of a gestalt – the dawning of an aspect that is simultaneously a perception or reperception of a whole" (*WM* L2). Moreover, despite my claims that referential language, or a realist approach to materiality, is easily hypostasized by thinking that has a taxonomical priority, I agree with Zwicky that non-metaphorical language is important. I do not mean to say that the language of reference is wrong, or less desirable; indeed, metaphor, as the crossing of contexts, as the site of an ecological complex, depends on non-metaphor, it depends on the distinctness of things in their language-games. I argue shortly that her concept of *this*ness is an example of the distinctness of things seen as what I am calling material metaphoricity.

There are some points of difference between Zwicky's writings and my aims in this project. My use of the term lyric is generally more specific than Zwicky's employment. I am interested in lyric, as I mentioned previously, as an example of metaphoricity. It is lyric art, poetry in particular, that is my focus. This is not to say that Zwicky's understanding of lyric as desirous wordlessness is not lurking in and around my discussion (the tension between "technology" and lyric as mediated by the "domesticity" of metaphor is especially relevant to my later discussion of the tension between totality and infinity in the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas). It is also my aim in this project to show that aspects of Zwicky's thinking, particularly those I incorporate into my notion of metaphoricity, are potentially sympathetic with the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas which emerges out of the continental tradition and which, ostensibly at least, is involved in a lineage of scepticism (along with Derrida and Hegel) that Zwicky claims she does not share. For the moment, however, I want to examine the implications of seeing metaphor as a social dynamic before considering the ethical implications of materiality as it is approached through contemporary environmental literary criticism.

4. Metaphor as a Social Structure

How can the structural dynamics of a rhetorical device come to describe a social relation? I have two arguments for why we should consider metaphor as a social structure. The first has to do with the examples set by poststructural theories of hegemony and the second has to do with Freud's concept of the fetish. There already exists a tradition of conceiving of figures as descriptive of social structures in contemporary debates about hegemony. For example, the emphasis on the importance of discursivity in the "post-Marxist" writings of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* offers an illustration of how metaphor and metonymy can be considered forms of social relation. They point out that "Synonymy, metonymy, metaphor are not forms of thought that add a second sense to a primary, constitutive literality of social relations; instead, they are part of the primary terrain itself in which the social is constituted" (110). Ernesto Laclau in particular is interested in Paul de Man's writings about tropes as a way of thinking the undecidability of overdetermined social relations in the context of tropological dynamics. While Laclau regards hegemony as a fundamentally metonymic relation rather than a metaphorical one, the example of thinking figures socially nonetheless exists. Similarly, Freud offers us a way to think of metaphor in a social context by subverting the ostensible distinctions between individual and group psychology. In "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," Freud notes that "The relations of an individual to his parents and to his brothers and sisters, to the object of his love, and to his physician—in fact all the relations which have hitherto been the chief subject of psycho-analytic research—may claim to be considered as social phenomena" (69). It is in the individual's experience of the fetish that the social phenomenon of metaphoricity is most explicitly expressed. For Freud the fetish emerges from the refusal of the male child to acknowledge the absence of his mother's penis. The child refuses to admit the reality of the absent penis because to do so presupposes the threat of his own castration. Thus, as Freud points out in his essay "Fetishism," the fetish is the "substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and—for reasons familiar to us—does not want to give up" (152-153). In this way the fetish is a form of metaphoricity: it is an articulation between "is" and "is not," between the presence of the mother's absent penis and the sign of its absence. Indeed, for Agamben, the "fetishist" as described by Freud, offers a model for the interpretation of metaphor in "which *the metaphor becomes in the realm of language what the fetish is in the realm of things*" (*Stanzas* 148). Consequently, the fetish, its metaphoricity, is a relational dynamic that involves the individual in a social formation that is necessarily larger than the individual.

5. The Problem of Metaphor in Poststructuralism and Ecocriticism

Despite willingness by some poststructuralist thinkers to consider metaphor as a social structure, as a relational dynamic not restricted to the realm of rhetoric, metaphor is often viewed negatively and restrictively. Despite ostensible opposition to poststructuralism by many ecocritics, metaphor is either marginalized for reasons not unlike those of the poststructuralists, or employed reductively. In an attempt by practitioners of both poststructuralism and ecocriticism to distinguish between the function of metaphor and other figures, to determine, as it were, a figural taxonomy, metaphor is frequently considered as an objectively present rhetorical device; the materiality of metaphor (that is to say its existence in texts) is approached in a manner inattentive to its ontological ambivalence. Poststructuralists, such as Laclau and de Man, associate metaphor with totality and necessity, with a closed view of the social. Ecocritics such as David W. Gilcrest similarly associate metaphor with a monolithic, anthropocentric lyrical "I." Both ecocriticism and poststructuralism, however, fail to approach metaphor as metaphoricity; they both fail to attend to the relational potentiality of metaphor.

In his essay "The Politics of Rhetoric," Ernesto Laclau repeatedly asserts the ethical primacy of metonymic social relations over metaphoric relations because he associates metaphor with totalization, with closed mythology, with necessity, where metonymy is associated with contingency and indeterminate openness. Laclau sees the history of democracy bifurcated by a fundamental cleavage:

> On the one hand, we have democracy as the attempt to construct the people as *one*, a homogenous social actor….The discourses around which this democratic ideal is constructed are, obviously, predominantly metaphoric….On the other hand, we have democracy as respect for difference, as shown, for instance, in multiculturalism or in the new pluralism associated with contemporary social movements. Here we have discourses that are predominantly metonymic… (250)

While Laclau does acknowledge that there are ultimately no discrete divisions between the democracies of metaphor and metonymy, while he allows that they do inform each other, he clearly attributes to metaphor a regressive penchant for totalization that undermines the aims of a pluralist democracy. Similarly, Paul de Man, for all of his interest in tropological dynamics, frequently relies on a model of metaphor as totality, as constituted by the "necessary link" that is "characteristic of all metaphorical systems" (*Allegories* 259). The fact that de Man refers to metaphor as a "system" here is antithetical to the way in which I understand its structural dynamic.

Both Laclau and de Man conceive of metaphor in an overly reductive way that emphasizes the function of "a" metaphor as a discrete entity, as a symbolic object. In doing so, they fail to attend to the metaphoricity of metaphor; to its relational dynamic as opposed to its material, symbolic presence. Laclau, for example, in arguing for the role of necessity in metaphor, describes a specific example (the wings of an airplane versus the wings of a building) that he claims restricts his thinking through its necessary, prescribed connections; he does not feel free "to call the 'wing' in any other way" (238). Similarly, de Man, in his essay on reading Proust in *Allegories of Reading* focuses on a specific example from Proust's text in making his claims about metaphor and totality: "The 'necessary link' that unites flies and summer is natural, genetic, unbreakable" (63). Like Laclau, de Man associates metaphor with closed systems and he associates metonymy with contingent openness when he suggests that "The inference of identity and totality that is constitutive of metaphor is lacking in the purely relational metonymic contact" (14).

What interests me about metaphor in my discussion is its relational potential, not its objective presence. That is to say, I am not interested in individual metaphors per se; I am interested in metaphorical thinking, in the tension that is involved with "seeing" something "as," with the "is" and "is not" of its relationship. I am interested in the thinking that gives rise to the metaphor; the shape that the metaphor takes in language is only a provisional attempt in any case. The limited prescription that Laclau feels bound by when thinking of the wing is a view of metaphor that assumes a discrete, non-resonant logic of meaning. Resonance is essential to metaphor. What are the bounds of resonance? What are the bounds of an ecosystem? There are no necessary boundaries. When I speak about metaphor I am speaking about the potential embodied in the metaphoric relation, I am not speaking about metaphor as an objective presence, as a closed linguistic phenomenon. Much discussion of figures in rhetoric focuses on thinking of the figure as an objective presence. There are those, including Laclau and de Man, who acknowledge that figures bleed into each other and are impossible to singularly separate by function; however, Laclau, de Man and others continue to insist nonetheless on taxonomical separations; in doing so they turn figures into objects. I am less concerned with the figure as a discrete rhetorical phenomenon and more concerned with the consequences of its rhythm, of its relational dynamic. Creating taxonomies of figures where one figure is more systematic than another in its faithfulness to meaning is to fail to approach thinking about figures in a lyrical way. It is to fail to approach figures as figures; it is to fail to approach them in their own domain, in their own environment, so to speak.

In ecocriticism the same failure to consider the metaphoricity of metaphors haunts their employment as characterizations of ecological dynamics. For example we are presented with "webs" and "chains" as descriptions of natural processes; ecosystems are often depicted as harmonious and balanced. These are often, however, overly simplistic renderings of natural circumstances. As William Howarth notes in his essay, "Some Principles of Ecocriticism," "This verbal facility has attracted some writers who sentimentalize ecology, exaggerating its holism with mythic and romantic imagery. Such notions seem naïve to modern ecologists, who find less evidence in nature of wholeness or stability than of nonlinear, discontinuous order" (75). In an essay entitled "Literature and Ecology" William Rueckert employs this kind of potentially romanticized imagery in his explication of the analogical links between a poem and the energy transfer in an ecosystem. While Rueckert does acknowledge that it is the process of how a poem coheres rather than what it may ultimately, with any stability, signify, his metaphor is posited as a kind of "proper" understanding of the reality of the poem: "A poem is stored energy, a formal turbulence, a living thing, a swirl in the flow. Poems are part of the energy pathways that sustain life. Poems are a verbal equivalent to fossil fuel" (110). While there are aspects of this kind of metaphorical thinking that are potentially valuable, the problem lies in the emphasis it gives to the discrete logic of substitution, to the totalizing capacity of the analogical leap. Metaphor here is offered as a representation of the real. What I want to suggest is that any relationship metaphor has with "reality" comes from its articulated ontological ambivalence, or resonance between the "is" and the "is not." To accept that a poem is a plant in metaphorical terms is to also to be aware that it is not. As Dana Phillips notes, the "ecocritical analysis of literary texts…proceeds haphazardly, by means of fuzzy concepts fashioned out of borrowed terms: words like 'ecosystem,' 'organism,' and 'wilderness' [which] are used metaphorically, with no acknowledgement of their metaphorical status" (578). This failure among ecocritics to attend to metaphoricity underlies a bias, which I address shortly, towards thinking the reality of the natural world in a systematically linguistic manner.

Even when ecocritics broach in any sustained way the possible significance of a metaphorical poetic to environmental ethics, it is only, ultimately, to renounce metaphor, like the poststructuralists, for its monolithic imposition of a totalized lyrical "I," or for its anthropocentric associations with mythic meaning. In his book *Greening the Lyre: Environmental Poetics and Ethics*, David W. Gilcrest argues that "There remains the theoretical possibility of a kind of representation that is both explicitly performative and acknowledges the contingency of the representative product" (65). He locates his notion of this representation in Wolfgang Iser's theory of "aesthetic semblance"; however, metaphor is also implicated in the kind of representation he is calling for, specifically Robert Frost's thinking about metaphor. Gilcrest is attracted to Frost's suggestion in his essay "Education by Poetry" that metaphor is a living thing, that it is life itself. In light of Frost's thinking Gilcrest suggests that "the metaphorical action of poetry serves the same function as the 'fictionalizing action' of the novel. If this is true, then we should be able to identify a poetry that treats of nature in terms of aesthetic semblance" (66). He proposes, moreover, that metaphor has potential as a means of expressing nonhuman interest within human discourse. Having said all of this, however, Gilcrest is critical of Frost's interest in wanting to understand metaphor as the "whole of thinking"; there is an anthropocentric hubris that exists in metaphor for Gilcrest, which provokes him to fear, not unlike Laclau and de Man, that metaphor simply re-inscribes totality, the lyrical "I." He opposes metaphor, which he dubs "poetry of more self" to meditation, which he calls "poetry of less self" (128). The passivity of the meditative frame of mind over the active imagination of metaphor results in a diminishment of the ego. He calls metaphor a "forged charm," which fails to fully connect us to the natural world (144).

I am not convinced, however, that the goal of environmental poetry is, as Gilcrest states, to put us in closer proximity to the natural world. If that were the case, wouldn't one be better advised to simply go out into the woods? I think the goal of environmental poetry is to be generative: it is to enact lyrical thinking that it is not limited by systematic logic; it is to make an issue of the unquestioned reality of materiality; it is to think of things and our relation to them otherwise than as single language-games. Poetry cannot give us access to the natural world as such, but it can offer us a model of attention to the material metaphoricity of bodies or things; it can provoke us to think the materiality of the natural world in ways not contained by systematic language. Gilcrest is calling for poetry to fully possess its object, to offer the natural world in the terms of realism (as we also see with Buell and Scigaj). Agamben notes in *Stanzas*, a book concerned with the material distinctions between the word of poetry and the word of philosophy, that "only if one is capable of entering into relation with unreality and with the unappropriable as such is it possible to appropriate the real and the positive" (xix). What gives us nature as such? Herein rests the importance of metaphor to ecocriticism and to environmental ethics as a bridge between the language of distinction and non-linguistic thought. Let us turn now to the question of realism and how metaphor offers a different way of thinking of environmental ethics

6. Ecocriticism and the Reality of Things

There are two main problems with the turn to realism in ecocriticism. First, as an aesthetic approach to nature, realism threatens to objectify a properly referential natural world. This problem emerges in part from the unquestioned association between realism and materialism. Despite his claims to the opposite, the celebration of classical realism in Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination* reinforces the link between language and world, between reference and the material object, between the environmental crisis and a properly literal approach. I focus on Buell here because he is the most outspoken proponent of realism in environmental writing; however, as I demonstrate below, I think the ecocritical work of others such as Leonard Scigaj and David W. Gilcrest also implicitly endorses the realist imperative to properly, and hence in a systematically linguistic way, render the referential world. The second problem with the turn to realism in ecocriticism, which I take up momentarily, is that what ecocritics like Buell claim on behalf of realism, through their various qualifications of the term, is actually better understood in the context of metaphor and metaphorical thinking. What is asked of realism, I contend, is less problematically asked of metaphorical thinking.

A significant problem with realism in ecocriticism is that it presumes an unquestioned association with materialism. The materiality of the referential world is literally assumed in the reality of the "ecopoem" (indeed, it is asserted as the proper focus of our attention, according to ecocritics). Literary theory, as Buell and others imply, has lost the proper object of its criticism. According to Buell, if we attend to what theory suppresses—the setting, the environmental circumstances of the poem—then we are, consequently, attending to the "factical reality" of nature (86). Daniel Tiffany writes in *Toy Medium* about the problems with historical materialist approaches to literature that assume an equation between materialism and realism. He notes that contemporary materialism does not ask the question of what constitutes material substance. Indeed, Tiffany goes on to argue that scientific materialism has always depended on images and tropes to depict the unobservable "reality" of matter. He suggests that lyric poetry provides an alternate engagement with materiality precisely because of its concern with images and allegories.[9]

What is important about this for my purposes is that matter cannot be easily reconciled with a realist aesthetic concerned with its fealty to rendering the world in language. Materialism, with its unquestioned assumptions about substantiality, is a species of linguistic or language-dependent thinking; it assumes the systematic logic of literal representation. Linguistic thinking, or language-dependent thought, presupposes divisions between things as a consequence of syntax and symbolism—as a consequence, we might say, of being systematically meaningful. Materialism is a form of linguistic thinking because it imposes a systematic approach to objects in the world that is dependent on discrete distinctions within a context of assumed substantiality. The reality of matter is a linguistic phenomenon inasmuch as it is hypostasized in the realist text. Even the very attempt to separate matter from language through recourse to realism, through the attempt to distinguish between the mediated world of relativism and the referential world of things, becomes a way of thinking the identity of matter linguistically. The claim that the realist text is able to point outside of language and that its primary concern is this outside assumes and reinforces the material link between reference and object within language itself—it makes of non-language, or the extra-linguistic, a knowable and presentable object in literal language. Lyrical approaches to materiality, however, in their very dependence on figures and metaphoricity, emphasize the insufficiency of language to fully present matter, or to discretely distinguish a Wittgensteinian "language-game" (a specific context of linguistic interaction) that escapes language. Metaphor does not make the thing literally present, but it gives us a way to stand in relation to a substantiality that is not measurably accessible.

While acknowledging the limitations of classical realism, Lawrence Buell chooses to focus on and celebrate realism precisely because it "points up what contemporary representation theory most vigorously suppresses" (*EI* 92). What is suppressed, he tells, is the empirical environment in favour of discursivity, in favour of the mediation of linguistic thinking. I think Buell is right to be concerned with this. However, I would suggest that the realism he explores endorses rather than undermines linguistic thinking; moreover, it endorses a view of materiality dependent on the systems of literal language. The faithfulness to the object that Buell lauds in the writings of John Ruskin and John Burroughs, for example, depends on an analytic of material proof. Indeed, the "rigor of realist aesthetics" championed by Ruskin emphasizes a "true" approach to the natural world that is capable of analytic distinctions among observable phenomena (91). Moreover, Burroughs' interest in authentic representations of the natural world becomes at times, by Buell's own admission, "ludicrously literal-minded" (89). In short, the realism of Ruskin and Burroughs offers itself as an argument, as a systematically accurate representation of the world in language. Inasmuch as this kind of realism looks to the world, it does so only to confirm the analytical accuracy of its linguistic representations. I know that this is not entirely the brand of realism that Buell has in mind, but to suggest that it is a test case for subverting the linguistic interests of literary theory I think is clearly false.

Realism that assumes the logic of faithful representation runs the risk of objectifying matter. We can see the dangers of this in the insistence among some ecocritics of a "proper" subject matter for environmental literature. Leonard Scigaj, for example, in his book *Sustainable Poetry: Four American Ecopoets*, sees the American lyric poets Jorie Graham and Robert Hass as fleeing from the natural world whenever they raise questions about the authority or certainty of perception and reference. He goes so far as to suggest that "A steady reading diet of such poetry will massage our youth into a perilous self-indulgence that will also render them oblivious to the needs of nature" (58). Scigaj's desire to see literature as a pragmatic engagement with nature has led to his view that ecopoetry should make, as a kind of realist imperative, the patterns and processes of nature available in the text. Similarly, David W. Gilcrest, in his book *Greening the Lyre*, insists that "No other attribute better distinguishes ecological poetry than its presumption of environmental fragility and looming disintegration" (21). Gilcrest underscores this point by examining poems that are painfully explicit in their literal treatment of environmental devastation. Consider, for example, the poem "New Ecology" by Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal; for Gilcrest this represents a prototypical ecological poem because it is a direct response to the ecological crisis:

> And flowers are flourishing.
> Armadillos are very happy with this government.
> We are recovering forests, streams, lagoons.
> We are going to decontaminate Lake Managua.

> Not only humans longed for liberation.
> All ecology groaned. The revolution
> is also for animals, rivers, lakes and trees. (qtd. in Gilcrest 20-21)

These perspectives are important; however, to suggest that attention to the environmental crisis must be the focused subject matter of an ecologically concerned poem threatens to reduce this poetry to an exercise dependent on the systems of literal linguistic thought. If a properly environmental poem is always a poem that literally addresses a polluted stream, or other readily identifiable environmental crises, for example, then I would suggest that this presupposes a systematic understanding of responsible reference. In fact, this view of poetry seems bound up in precisely the kind of linguistic thinking it proposes to criticize. As Dana Phillips reminds us, "Realism is idiomatic. It works only when interlocutors share similar assumptions about what is perfectly ordinary and its proper description" (597). Realism in these terms involves us in a precise Wittgensteinian language-game. In *Wisdom and Metaphor* Zwicky demonstrates that language-games function as the rules behind systems of reference. I want to suggest that it is because metaphor draws connections between contexts, between language-games and their systems of understanding that it subverts the totality of a realist perspective that argues for a proper linguistic representation of matter.[10]

There is a durable association in Western thinking that connects the "proper" with the literal and the "improper" with the metaphorical. In his book *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture* Agamben devotes attention to these distinctions in the context of a fundamental scission in Western society: the difference between the word of philosophy and the word of poetry. According to Agamben there have been cultural epochs of the proper and improper in ascendance and decline throughout Western history. There have been oscillations between periods of "the improper, in which the symbolic-emblematic occupies the central place in culture, and epochs of the proper, in which the improper is pushed to the margins, without either of the two discourses succeeding in entirely reducing its own double" (141). He notes that the obsession with emblems that characterized the baroque and Renaissance periods as well as the interest in allegory that characterized the mysticism of medieval times have their foundation in an acceptance of the improper. Agamben argues that it was in such "epochs of the emblem" that Christian iconography could develop caricatures of the human body rather than having to adhere to the partial presentation of bodies, circumventing the biblical prohibition that the only proper signification could be wholly, divinely provided: the result of the dictum "in [H]is image and likeness" (143). Eventually, however, the improper gave way again to the proper, a re-emergence represented most fully for Agamben by Hegel and his unease with respect to the symbolic and "his diffidence toward the allegorism of the Romantic avant-garde" (144). There are similar hesitations with respect to the symbolic and the allegorical among contemporary ecocritics. As I have discussed, the proper and the literal are firmly connected in the realist imperatives of Buell, Scigaj and Gilcrest. Moreover, at the level of critical genres there are anxieties among ecocritics about ensuring their discipline is "real" and properly legitimate. In her ecocritical study of Canadian women's poetry, *Greenwor(l)ds*, Diana M.A. Relke explicitly aims to reinforce that "ecocriticism is a legitimate endeavour in its own right, rather than some ephemeral spinoff of 'real' literary studies" (317).

The debate among ecocritics between the ostensibly extra-textual interests of realism and the linguistically mediated concerns of literary theory is simply an extension of the philosophical debate between empiricists (or realists) and idealists (or relativists). In her discussion of the distinctions between empiricism and idealism, Zwicky points out that empirical approaches to the world must dispense with the urge to prove the existence of that world in analytic arguments. She suggests that idealism (by extension relativism, and social constructionism), with its belief in the mediation of the world by thinking, by discourse, is able to offer systematically convincing proof for the non-existence of a world not already shaped by our ideas of that world. Empiricism, on the other hand, can offer no analytic proof, but has much in the way of extra-logical sensorial apprehensions of the world outside of language. The fact that empiricism cannot provide proof of this world in language is, as Zwicky puts it so memorably, "a problem with arguments, not a problem with the world" ("Once" 195). I would suggest that Buell's interest in classical realism and Scigaj's and Gilcrest's interest in the proper presentation of the reality of the environmental crisis reinforce the linguistic logic that each purports to criticize in literary theory; they reinforce the mediation of objects by the analytic of linguistic proof. In asking us to think of environmental representation as "akin to the novel of manners," Buell, despite his intentions and exhortations that we learn to read the environment in an informed way, risks promoting conformity to the codes and categories of the language-dependent thinking he is attempting to escape (*EI* 107).

I do not want to cast realism in overly reductive terms. Buell rightfully notes that the reputation of realism has suffered at the hands of modernists and postmodernists. However, notwithstanding my claims that Buell's employment of realism reinforces the discursive thinking he professes to avoid, it is not clear to me why Buell would want to argue for realism in the first place. The approach to the world in literature that he claims he is after is more easily explained, I would argue, by invoking the relational dynamics of metaphoricity. He notes, for example, that his project of rendering the "object-world" in the text is "sometimes best achieved through what would seem to be outright fiction or distortion" (*EI* 103). Here Buell is ultimately admitting the centrality of a figurative, imaginative relation (through "improper" distortion) to any potential rendering of the world. Moreover, he points out that literature should not take the systematic approach to the world that science takes; rather, it is the role of literature "to present theory as narrative or descriptive exposition rather than as argument. A certain lyricism is thus also encouraged" (94). Indeed, his desire to see environmental writing as a relational structure poised between the inner and outer worlds, between, we might say, the claims of the empiricist and the idealist, between different language-games of logic, all but raise the spectre of metaphoricity: "Representational projects that aspire to render the object-world need not be monologic, may indeed be founded on self-division about the possibilities of such a project, may even make these self-divisions explicit to the reader, and are as likely to dislocate the reader as to placate her" (99). What Buell is after is a discursive relation that gives shape in language to what is not ultimately reducible to referentiality. His celebration of realism is not consistent with the work he asks of this term. He wants writing that utilizes its referential dimension while doing so in a way that acknowledges the incapacity of words to equal things, and that in turn acknowledges the irreducible world outside of language. This sounds less like the realism he celebrates and more like the relational dynamic of metaphoricity.

7. Lyric Ethics and Material Metaphoricity

In light of the problems with realism and ecocriticism, how, then, does "lyric ethics" allow us to think differently about materiality? I turn to metaphor as a way of thinking about matter that is responsible to the complexity of a materiality that at the same time "is" and "is not," that is infused with the indefinite movement of difference. Etymologically, the word metaphor itself comes from Greek expressions of travel and transport: to carry over, to ferry across (*LP* R62). Any relationship that metaphor, conceived here as a structural potential, has with "reality" comes from the relational movement within metaphor's own ontological grounding. Paul Ricoeur concludes that "The metaphorical 'is' at once signifies both 'is not' and 'is like'" (7). It is this articulation, this ontological ambivalence, this relational movement *between* that I want to emphasize as metaphoricity, as the structural, ethical potential of metaphor. To consider matter in terms of this ontological ambivalence, this articulatory, relational dynamic is to attend to material metaphoricity; it is to apprehend materiality as a consequence of extra-logical, non-systematic connections between and beside the language-games of reference where material presence is assumed.

Jan Zwicky's take on metaphor in her book *Wisdom and Metaphor* is important to my theory of lyric ethics for two main reasons: first, she offers implicit support for my claims that metaphor undermines realist interests in the language of material distinction by reminding us that metaphor "is an explicit refusal of the idea that the distinctness of things is their most fundamental ontological characteristic" (L59). Their distinctness is only *one* of their characteristics, whereas interpenetration and connectedness are the others. Moreover, she argues that "Reductionism says connectedness is sameness" (L105). In metaphor, I would argue, connectedness is difference, it posits the "is" and the "is not." Realism can be seen in these terms as a species of reductionism, as an attempt to see connectedness as sameness, the material world analytically present in the text.

Second, and more significantly, Zwicky's view of materiality, as explored in her concept of "*this*ness," is significant for my purposes because it is an example of material metaphoricity, of matter perceived metaphorically (in terms of how we look at it and also how we think of its constitution). When we pay "ontological attention," as Zwicky calls it, we are responding to the particularity of things: this laundry basket, this birch tree, etc (L52). Ontological attention does not view things as resources, but rather allows us to perceive *this*ness. In the terms that Zwicky describes, the structural character of the ontology of *this*ness resembles the structure of metaphor in that it asserts something is, and is not, something else. She notes succinctly that "*This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it" (L55). She acknowledges that, while *this*ness may appear to be a relational, metaphorical structure, our phenomenal experience of it is focused; the uniqueness of things strikes us as utterly distinct. This may on the surface appear to re-inscribe the realist assumptions about material presence that I am critiquing in ecocriticism; it may appear to renew the claims of a discretely accessible thing. However, as Zwicky points out, we cannot give a linguistic account of our experience of *this*ness that is not clumsy and inadequate (L53). It is not simply accessible through referential language. Metaphor, however, points to *this*ness by seeing it in the larger resonant context of the world. Thus, in my understanding of material metaphoricity, metaphor points to a materiality that is resonantly structured in the terms of metaphoricity and it enacts metaphoricity as a means of being open to that resonance.

This is how I think of "lyric ethics." The distinctness of things has gravity only through a recognition of interconnectedness, of openness. Things cannot be captured in idiomatic realist language-games. This notion of materiality is not unlike that expressed at the level of the subject in the ethics of Levinas, where I would argue that the openness of the self to the other is a relation of metaphoricity, it is articulation, a whole that is at once not a totality. I would propose (and I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Three) that in his attempt to think the phenomenology of the non-phenomenon (i.e. the face of the other) Levinas metaphorically constitutes a relational subject. It is important to note that Levinas insists in his work that the face is not a metaphor; indeed, in places he goes out of his way to uphold old stereotypes about poetry's scandalous relationship with reality. However, I think what is behind Levinas's thinking is a very metaphorical engagement with the limits of referential language, and systematic thinking. For Levinas the encounter with the other, for example, is a meeting that occurs outside of representation, outside of formal logic. Consequently, the encounter is resistant to conventional linguistic expression, which, as Zwicky tells us, is the initial "wordlessness" from which lyrical thinking emerges. Moreover, the result of the face to face is to make subjectivity relational: the other becomes involved with who I am. This, it seems to me, is a perfect example of a metaphorical dynamic where the distinctness of terms, in this case the irreducible positions of self and other, are at once upheld and interrupted by their own interconnection. By entering my life, the other interrupts my own materiality as an atomistic, totalized existence. The very materiality of the self involves the other. As Levinas reminds us, material existence is being encumbered with oneself (*TO* 56). Thus, lyric ethics is an attention to the material metaphoricity of bodies or things. Judith Butler points out in the context of reductive arguments that pit the body as discursive construction against the body as objective corporality, that "Although the body depends on language to be known, the body also exceeds every possible linguistic effort of capture" (257). So does the materiality of nature. Thus, if our attention is to be ethical, if it is to stand in relation without objectification, if it is to approach the world of matter in materiality's own resonant terms, then lyric is a formally sympathetic engagement.

In his posthumously published book *Aesthetic Ideology* Paul de Man examines Immanuel Kant's entreaty that we must "see...as poets do" when we regard the sublimity of the ocean or the sky (126). For de Man this represents an approach to materiality that has not adequately been considered by those who have studied Kant. This "material vision" or "material sublime" comes to stand for a materiality that is ultimately impossible to name in more than a provisional sense (Warminksi 8). De Man notes that in looking at the sky or the ocean "The dynamics of the sublime mark the moment when the infinite is frozen into the materiality of stone...it is, indeed...the complete loss of the symbolic" (127). More recently critics have approached de Man's concern with this issue as a way to think materiality without matter (Cohen xii). To some degree lyric ethics asks us to think of a materiality without matter, inasmuch as it subverts a view of matter as an objective resource and proposes a view of materiality based on articulation and interconnectedness. However, there are some important differences. De Man claims that

> The language of the poets therefore in no way partakes of mimesis, reflection, or even perception, in the sense which would allow a link between sense experience and understanding, between perception and apperception. Realism postulates a phenomenalism of experience which is here being denied or ignored. Kant's looking at the world

> just as one sees it ('wie man ihn sieht') is an absolute, radical formalism that entertains no notion of reference or semiosis (128).

While I am drawn to de Man's repudiation of a realist approach to materiality and find interesting the idea of a formal approach to the world that could be considered in the terms of metaphoricity, I do not see metaphor as completely ignoring the referential world. It makes use of that world as much as it undermines the totalities of its referential assumptions. The ethical import of material metaphoricity is precisely its hinge between the worlds of totality and infinity, between the desire to address, or be addressed, by the *this*ness of things and the inability to materialize that expression in language. If poets offer any take on a "material sublime" it is precisely because the hinged ontology of metaphoricity, between the "is" and the "is not," is an attention where perception constantly returns to the question of its own attention, to the resonant ways in which matter is meaningful.[11]

In closing this chapter I would like to add what may seem like an infuriating caveat. Lyric ethics is not an applied ethics. It cannot be a set of rules for approaching the natural world, or the question of the environment. Lyric ethics, like Zwicky's notion of "lyric philosophy," stands beside practicality. However, rather than admitting this as political irrelevance, I would propose that this space outside of application is in fact highly political as a space of categorical resistance. It is a space of pure potential, of articulatory relations, of material events that have no objective materiality in linguistic thinking. Perhaps we can think of it as activism that encourages a kind of attention that is not reducible to linguistic code or description; a form of listening, perhaps, that might serve to hear the imperative of the other, human and nonhuman.

Notes

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[1] Portions of this chapter have been previously published in the following publications: Dickinson, Adam. "Lyric Ethics: Ecocriticism, Material Metaphoricity, and the Poetics of Don McKay and Jan Zwicky." *Canadian Poetry* 55 (2004): 34-52; Dickinson, Adam. "Love In The Time of Clear-cuts – *Thinking and Singing: Poetry and the Practice of Philosophy* (Ed. by Tim Lilburn)." *The Antigonish Review* 135 (2003): 83-88.

[2] My discussion of "lyric matter" and "material metaphoricity" are indebted to Daniel Tiffany's notion of "lyric substance" in *Toy Medium*. Tiffany's interest in material substance "as a medium that is inescapably informed by the pictures we compose of it" is central to thinking matter lyrically (9). However, in the interests of proposing a theory of environmental ethics, I focus on metaphor and the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity in order to foreground the relational dynamic (between "is" and "is not," between language-dependent and extra-linguistic thinking) intrinsic to lyrical apprehensions of matter. Through the succeeding chapters, this relational dynamic becomes central to a theory of "lyric ethics" that encompasses apprehensions of materiality as well as temporality.

[3] Buell *EI* 430; Scigaj 11-13; Gilcrest 21.

[4] Certainly Zwicky's notion of lyric as the desire for wordlessness underlies my understanding of "lyric." However, it is my aim here to focus on the shape lyrical thinking takes in language (which is necessarily imperfect)—that is, lyric art, or poetry in this case, or even more specifically, metaphor. My notion of metaphor as articulation, however, is indebted to her discussion of metaphor as "domestic understanding" in *Wisdom and Metaphor*.

[5] See Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*; Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*.

[6] See Daniel Tiffany, *Toy Medium*; Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas*; Theodore Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society"; Paul de Man, "Lyric and Modernity" (for a further discussion see Tiffany, *Toy Medium*, 69, 70, 71); Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel*; Robert Frost, "Education by Poetry" and "The Figure a Poem Makes."

[7] Zwicky writes in an interview ("There is No Place That Does Not See You") about the non-linguistic nature of lyric poetry in general: "I think poetry may be a species of non-linguistic thought, whose peculiarity is that it gets expressed in language...I find that the thinking doesn't get as mangled when I translate into genres that are generally regarded as 'poetic'—I'd include aphoristic prose here, too, though" (116).

[8] In *Wisdom and Metaphor* Zwicky not only connects the Wittgensteinian concept of "seeing-as" to its obvious metaphorical implications, but suggests that understanding itself has the form of seeing-as: "The experience of understanding something is always the experience of a gestalt – the dawning of an aspect that is simultaneously a perception or reperception of a whole" (*WM* L2). For Zwicky, thinking that aims at understanding (in its activity of "seeing-as") is a form of resistance to the linguistic orthodoxy of reference (*WM* L46).

[9] See Tiffany 3, 71, 160, 268.

[10] In his essay "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," Bruno Latour argues for a new approach to realism that is in keeping with the metaphorical approach to matter that I am advocating here. Latour argues that "Reality is not defined by matters of fact" (157). Rather, Latour traces the etymology of the word "thing" back to its linguistic roots in order to

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emphasize its relational dynamic, hinged between "object" and "issue" (158). The objects and things of reality are relational, but not in a way that undermines their existence as real; rather: "A gathering, that is, a thing, an issue, inside a Thing, an arena, can be very sturdy, too, on the condition that the number of its participants, its ingredients, nonhumans as well as humans, not be limited in advance. It is entirely wrong to divide the collective, as I call it, into the sturdy matters of fact, on the one hand, and the dispensable crowds, on the other" (171). Latour ultimately argues that we require a critical approach that does not reduce the matter of criticism to discrete matters of fact. On the contrary, what is required is a criticism sensitive to material metaphoricity, "a multifarious inquiry launched with the tools of anthropology, philosophy, metaphysics, history, sociology to detect *how many participants* are gathered in a *thing* to make it exist and to maintain its existence" (170). This is a view of the materiality of critique apprehended in the terms of metaphoricity.

[11] A more detailed discussion of the "sublime" experience of the elements is taken up in Chapter Five as a discussion of wonder. For reasons outlined in that chapter "wonder" rather than the "sublime" is a more useful expression of the potential experience, enabled by lyric ethics, of being open to the metaphoricity of the elemental, in terms of both matter and time.

2. THE MATTER OF POETRY: Zwicky, McKay, and Graham[1]

The deer and the dachshund are one.
Well, the gods grow out of the weather.
The people grow out of the weather;
The gods grow out of the people.
Encore, encore, encore les dieux . . .

(Wallace Stevens, "Loneliness in Jersey City")

For me, images and metaphors, what we see and what we imagine, their perpetual undermining of each other, their paradox, their ambiguity...gets at the core of our existence because our existence, too, cannot be paraphrased.

(Charles Simic, from a letter to Charles Wright in *Quarter Notes*)

1. How to Get Close to Things

What splendid distance, what recesses of ineffable pomp and loveliness in the sunset! But who can go where they are, or lay his hand or plant his foot thereon? Off they fall from the round world forever and ever.

(Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature")

At the beginning of the second of his two essays entitled "Nature" (published in 1844) Ralph Waldo Emerson lyrically describes the languid details of an "Indian Summer." It is these moments in October, he tells, us that are testament to a world that has reached its perfection, that has established its natural harmony. The "sunny hours" stretch time while the day "sleeps over the broad hills" and lights even the most solitary of places (183, 184). It is in such moments that a person leaves his or her taxonomic priorities: "The knapsack of custom falls off his back with the first step he makes into these precincts…Here we find nature to be the circumstance which dwarfs every other circumstance, and judges like a god all men that come to her"

(184). In consuming our attention, in interrupting our consciousness of history, church, state, and calendar, the landscape becomes part of our being, directing us, absorbing us with "new pictures" and "thoughts fast succeeding each other, until…all memory [is] obliterated by the tyranny of the present, and we [are] lead in triumph by nature" (185).

It is the "tyranny of the present," however, that presents a problem for Emerson in the essay. How is nature present to us? How are we to be in close proximity to its materiality? He acknowledges that in moments such as his October reverie "we come to our own, and make friends with matter" (185). However, he later points out that "we live in a system of approximations…We are encamped in nature, not domesticated" (206). Indeed, nature does not yield itself to our full satisfaction; its materiality remains alluringly but excruciatingly beyond us, beyond our capacities of comprehension and apprehension. Emerson states it thus:

> This disappointment is felt in every landscape. I have seen the softness and beauty of the summer-clouds floating feathery overhead, enjoying, as it seemed, their height and privilege of motion, whilst yet they appeared not so much the drapery of this place and hour, as forelooking to some pavilions and gardens of festivity beyond. It is an odd jealousy: but the poet finds himself not near enough to his object. The pine-tree, the river, the bank of flowers before him, does not seem to be nature. Nature is still elsewhere….The present object shall give

> you this sense of stillness that follows a pageant which has just gone by. (208-209)

The poet is never near enough to his object. With this conundrum Emerson raises two important questions that are central to the concerns of my project: what is matter and how do poets apprehend it? Emerson's recourse to lyrical description in grounding the material point of departure in his essay is an implicit endorsement of the unique resources that lyric brings to engaging with things, to taking or making one's place, as it were. As I outlined in the previous chapter, the operative dynamic of lyric, metaphoricity, is a way of apprehending the materiality of things that is open to the resonant difference that constitutes material substance, as it is understood, for example, in the terms of quantum mechanics. I also argued that it is metaphoricity rather than realism that best reflects the engagement with the natural world that ecocritics call for, concerned as they are with the proximity of "real" matter.

In this chapter I engage the poetry of Jan Zwicky, Don McKay, and Jorie Graham in order to demonstrate how their lyrical treatments of materiality put forward a metaphorical or "lyric ethics" through their apprehension of what I have called "material metaphoricity." The openness to articulation that this form of apprehension requires makes objects proximate in a way that is both intimate and foreign, present and non-present. These poets employ a metaphorical poetic as a means of responding in resonant sympathy to the ontological ambivalence, emphasized above by Emerson, that inhabits our experience of material presence.

The first two poets I address, Jan Zwicky and Don McKay, are part of a group of Canadian poets who are involved in an extended "conversation" about issues pertaining to ethics, the environment, and the intersection between poetry and philosophy. In books such as *Poetry and Knowing* and *Thinking and Singing: Poetry and the Practice of Philosophy*, Zwicky and McKay, along with other poets (especially Robert Bringhurst, Dennis Lee, and Tim Lilburn) have explored in essay form the scission, as Giorgio Agamben calls it, "between the poetic word and the word of thought" (*Stanzas* xvi).[2] These concerns manifest themselves in the poetry of both writers as an interest in metaphor and in the materiality of the world. The meaningfulness of things is frequently explored in their works as a consequence of being at home, existing among the desire and humility we have for the physical world that crosses into and out of our understanding of domesticity. I want to examine Zwicky's poems "The Geology of Norway," and "Cashion Bridge" in order to consider how they both demonstrate an emerging lyrical or metaphorical apprehension of matter; in addition, they both complicate the materiality of meaning itself. Following this I examine McKay's poem "Three Eclogues" in order to explore the "adjacency" of materiality in metaphorical apprehensions, and its importance to my conception of lyric ethics.

The next part of this chapter is devoted to Jorie Graham and the poem "Notes on the Reality of the Self" from her book *Materialism*. Despite her relative prominence in contemporary American poetry she has been the subject of very little ecocritical work. I consider the formal sympathies between Graham's work and

Zwicky's work in order to explore the "ecological" structures they both create by incorporating other texts into resonant relation with their own works. I respond to Helen Vendler's claim that Graham turns the self into a thing by arguing that rather than moving from one to the other, Graham's sequence of poems "Notes on the Reality of the Self" demonstrate that things and selves are interrelated in their constitution as material metaphoricity, and that what is at work in this articulation of self and world is a materiality resonantly open to difference, to non-systematic meaning.

Ecocritical readings have been criticized for offering impressionistic takes on the symbolism of nature. I am interested in McKay's, Zwicky's and Graham's poems not for their linguistic pictures, but for the potential relations with the world and with language that they enact in their formal metaphoric properties. I see their poems as "exemplary" in the way that Giorgio Agamben theorizes the example. I close this chapter with a discussion of exemplarity and its consequences for how I engage these poets in my work and for how I propose to understand lyric poetry's capacity for lyric ethics. An "example," according to Giorgio Agamben in his book *The Coming Community*, is always beside itself; an individual called to exemplify an entire class is always insufficient, its reality is adjacent to its exemplarity (9-10). Similarly, metaphors can be considered to be examples; in proposing literal nonsense they stand beside logic. By filling in gaps in language, metaphors are expressions of forms of thought that occur beside the systems of linguistic, or language-dependent, thinking. Lyric ethics, emerging as it does from a metaphorical poetic, proposes a materiality that is beside itself, that emphasizes a relational ethic of pure potential. As I described previously but will emphasize here again, I use the term material metaphoricity to describe this relational apprehension of matter.

2. The Geology of Bridges: Jan Zwicky

The bridge, less necessary to what the Golden Gate is *than the headlands of either the San Francisco or Marin Peninsulas, has nonetheless become definitive: it embodies one shape of human desire.*

(Jan Zwicky, "*Trauermusik*")

The publication of Zwicky's book, *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth*, has an unusual history. Originally the book was hand-made by the author, each copy individually sewn and assembled in response to a request from a reader. I remember when I first saw one of these hand-made versions of the book while at a friend's house in Fredericton. The cover was plain, brown, grainy, recycled paper, and the binding was an intricate webbing of stringed sections. Inside the cover was a small colour picture of a lavender field. If I wanted a copy, I was told, all I had to do was ask Jan Zwicky.

In a preface to the eventual trade edition of *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth* (which arrived some two years later because she could not keep up with production demands), Zwicky explains that she produced the first version of the book on her own to satisfy a desire "to connect the acts of publication and publicity with the initial act of composition, to have a book whose public gestures were in keeping with the intimacy of the art" (7). In other words, Zwicky sought to make the materiality of the book, its production and its delivery, resonate with its poetic content. This strikes me as a self-conscious attempt to blend lyric and matter, to approach the materiality of the book in light of its lyric gestures. The poems in *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth* are concerned in their own way with the role of lyric thinking in determining the materiality of things, of places, of the social and natural environment. I examine this claim by focusing first on "The Geology of Norway" in order to demonstrate one example of an emerging lyrical, or metaphorical, apprehension of matter. Following this I focus on the complex and competing visions of materiality in "Cashion Bridge," a poem about the very materiality of meaning itself.

Zwicky's poem, "The Geology of Norway," is about the discovery of material metaphoricity through "lyric thinking." The poem takes place in time between Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and his *Philosophical Investigations*, and begins by looking back to the *Tractatus* and its interest in defined parameters and orderly relationships. The entire text of the *Tractatus* is set up in numbered arguments extending from each of its seven central propositions. It is an integrated form, a virtual crystallography in its geometric design. As Zwicky notes in her preface to the poem (the preface accompanied the poem's first publication in *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*), we pick up on the imagined voice of Ludwig Wittgenstein in Norway amidst a reassessment of his work in logic and amidst the early drafts of his later publications. This later work, as Zwicky acknowledges, is generally held by critics to be discontinuous with the *Tractatus*.

Bertrand Russell remarks in the Introduction to the *Tractatus* that Wittgenstein "is concerned with the conditions which would have to be fulfilled by a logically perfect language" (ix). This concern with logic is emphasized at the beginning of the poem where we are presented with the compression of the world into facts, into an objectified, totalized matter: "a geologic epoch / rendered to a slice of rock you hold between / your finger and your thumb. / That is a fact" (32). Matter here is circumscribable, delineable, and logical. The poem proceeds in a way that is not simply critical of this earlier, logic-centred thinking; rather, the narrator enacts his own self-reflexive "seeing-as," his own attempt at understanding by way of articulation between the different logical contexts of language-games (in the following case, the world of facts and the world of light):[3] "That's what I wanted," he decides among different ways to see facts, "words made of that: language / that could bend light" (33). Moreover, it is not simply *what* things mean but *that* they mean and do so elusively that provokes such wonder in the speaker: "This is the mystery: meaning. / Not that these folds of rock exist / but that their beauty, here, / now, nails us to the sky" (34). The "*this*ness" of things, which, as I discussed in the last chapter, is a focused experience of matter that commands attention but resists description, inspires an awareness in this case of meaningful resonant relation.

This wonder, this "bewilderment / by beauty," that distracts the speaker from the logical work he had sought, that makes him stand beside his own system of thinking, becomes the central issue of the poem (34). The speaker recognizes the interruption of his materialist thinking: "I wanted to become rock myself. I thought / if I could find, and say, / the perfect word, I'd nail / mind to world, and find / release" (34-35). However, what we encounter in the last part of the poem is the mystery of meaning "seen as" the mystery of material origin. The last three stanzas of the poem are taken up with a description of the geological origins of Norway, the plate tectonics that have shaped it over the ages.[4] There was a time, the speaker notes, when "you could hike from Norway / down through Greenland to the peaks / of Appalachia" (35). Things move, they are dynamic, their relationships are not discrete totalities. The speaker admits that he cannot reduce the materiality of the world systematically; rather at the end of the poem he is engaged in a lyrical relationship with the landscape, a metaphorical relationship with the end of the world, the stillness therein that cannot be the product of a linear time.

> So I was wrong.
> This doesn't mean
> that meaning is a bluff.
> History, that's what
> confuses us. Time
> is not linear, but it's real.
> The rock beneath us drifts,
> and will, until the slow cacophony of magma
> cools and locks the continents in place.
> Then weather, light,
> and gravity
> will be the only things that move.
>
> And will they understand?
> Will they have a name for us?—Those
> perfect changeless plains,
> those deserts,
> the beach that was this mountain,
> and the tide that rolls for miles across
> its vacant slope. (36)

The end of things cannot be locked into the expectations of time the way the meaning of matter cannot be locked into language, into facts; yet it is the "*this*ness" of the mountain, its geology, that inspires this resonant thinking, this question which is itself a response to an implied address from the geography. This is an example of how coming to think lyrically, metaphorically, about matter allows one to stand in relation to difference. It is precisely this relationship with difference, with the unknowing expressed in "error," that is given an ethical inflection at the end of the poem: "So I was wrong," the speaker exclaims, "This doesn't mean / that meaning is a bluff. / …the rock beneath us drifts." Meaning is not a fake and neither is it a precipice (depending on one's metaphorical take). It is the ecology of one's relationships with the world. This poem, hinged between the geometrics of the *Tractatus* and the wonder of the *Investigations*, is itself a relation of metaphoricity between the two. It enacts in its formal structure the metaphoricity of its lyric apprehension of materiality.

In the long poem "Cashion Bridge" from *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth*, the apprehension of materiality through lyric thinking is arrived at as a kind of necessity for thinking one's relationship to the artefacts of intimately inhabited places. In this poem the attempt to name place, the attempt to specifically locate an environment gives way to lyricism, it gives way to the irreducible contexts of things, to the insufficiency of their linguistic being; it gives way to the apprehension of the material metaphoricity of things. The poem ultimately contrasts a vision of materiality as objective presence with a vision less dependent on the logic of presence and absence, a vision that emphasizes the paradoxical, non-systematic relations of lyrical thinking.

The poem begins with the speaker admitting the limitations of language: "It would be as well at the outset to admit / how even to have said this much / is to have failed" (41). The speaker reveals that she wants to recount a moment not simply by stopping it in time, not by fixing it as knowable matter, but by holding it up to the light "in the starry leak / of epochs" (41). The light that holds the moment is lyrically resonant; it contains music, or more specifically it contains the silence before music, where, according to the speaker, the beginnings of music are felt most profoundly. It is here, in the beginning with "hands poised above the keys" that we feel "fingers stretching through it to – / well, / what? the piece? the *thing*?" (41). How does one determine one has arrived at the *thing*? The poem as a whole, like the Emersonian conundrum of poetic proximity that I discussed earlier, is a reckoning with such beginnings. Zwicky writes with reference to Hegel that "only by understanding what it's not / can we come to understand what something is. / This is the difficulty of beginnings" (41). The difficulty of beginnings is also the problem of material presence in the logic of linguistic meaning. How is the world present to us; where does it begin? The names of objects may well mark their origins in language, but is their reality so discretely accessible?

To get to Cashion Bridge we begin by walking west. The speaker does not, however, offer us a linear map. Instead we are presented with descriptions about the turning elderberry trees and of the drought-dulled maple branches at the Kennedy's; there is Old Mr. Irvine's land and Dave Peterpiece's driveways; scotch pine, oaks, maples, dogs, cornfields and barns stretch alongside the road (42). The plethora of details about the environment unfolds in the poem in such a way that we are presented with an aggregate composition of where the poem provisionally arrives: the Cashion sideroad. From here more elements crowd our sense of the road and its contexts. It is the interrelated complexity of these and subsequent contexts (families, agriculture, U.S. contraband traffickers) that create an ecology of material details; the Cashion sideroad is not one indivisible thing, it is not an atom available to definition. The speaker admits as much, confessing that this descriptive tack "isn't / what I meant to try to say: / it's the starting out / I do not understand" (43). Indeed, it is the beginning, the point at which matter becomes matter and enters the stability of objective presence that continues to elude her.

The speaker comes to understand that what she wants to express about the bridge is not reducible to the object of the bridge as such; rather, the process of approach and its attendant, ostensibly tangential relations with the material environment of the road, the neighbourhood, are inextricably bound up with any presence the bridge may possess:

> What I wanted
> was the walking, not the walking-to but
> the not-getting-there, the every moment
> starting out, the every moment
> being lifted in an arc against the moment of arrival: the anticipation
> is terrific, yet always nothing
> happens when I'm there – so
> not even this, but the ungraspableness
> of knowing, the inarticulateness of
> that flexed second above the keys,
> of how we are translated,
> that held breath
> between the future and the past that's neither, but is still
> the only place we'll ever be arriving

> to, the only place it's possible
> we are. (44-45)

To be material, to be *here*, is to be hinged between the "is" and "is not" of temporality ("between the future and the past that's neither…"). Presence itself, by being cast between the past, the future and imbued with the ungraspable rhythms of arrival, is understood in the relational terms of material metaphoricity. This temporal ecology between past and present is important to my discussion about archives in Chapters Four and Five; however, it is also important here because Zwicky uses it to establish a contrast between competing notions of materiality. Time informs the speaker's relationship with things. She remembers what it was like to have her future stretched-out in front of her. The chairs and tables of the room the speaker occupied in past summers, and from which she started out on this walk to the bridge, raise questions about their own status as objects. Cashion Bridge is a place where memory inhabits each visit. However, it is the tendency to imagine oneself against a backdrop of temporal continuity that Zwicky critiques as a form of systematic materialist thinking:

> Thinking that the future, your return,
> will give this present meaning
> is just one more gesture of possession: imagining
> the emptiness as loss, as failure, a stutter
> in the pure trajectory of occupation… (46)

This is at once a view of matter anthropocentrically conceived, focused through the attending human consciousness. It is also, however, a view of matter that presupposes a logic of systematic presence: the present will become clear, will be an object operative in the logical narrative of one's life upon one's return in the future armed with a larger narrative. To see that which has no logical meaning as synonymous with absence and that which is meaningful as synonymous with presence is a view of materiality predicated on the systems of linguistic thinking. That is to say, meaning is present by way of its capacity to be objectified, to be expressed according to a symbolic system. In opposition to this way of thinking, the speaker proposes a lyrical approach to matter that apprehends the material metaphoricity of things by both affirming the failure of any totalizing linguistic gesture and also affirming the distinctness of matter. The speaker admits that the complications with making sense of the present is "a failure, of course it's failure, / but not the one we think it is. / For that is what / the world has been: not / what we thought" (46). The world is not present as a discrete object; it is not determined by our own caprice. The speaker adds: "thinking / we are being's origin / is trying to become / its end" (46). What is required is to relinquish the anthropocentric teleology of a future made meaningful by systematic narrative, which is, in effect, to relinquish ownership of things by determining their meaning. To attend to material metaphoricity, with its openness to the "is" and "is not" of things, with its formal resonance (as I mentioned in the last chapter) with the structural ontology of *this*ness, is at once to encounter and to let go.

It is "the letting-go of love" that closes the poem. The last two dozen lines present a long list of items that the speaker is hauling to the town dump. The material is culled from the attic and cellar—artefacts of five families from over thirty years. Through this process she once again reckons with the two different notions of materiality discussed above: "the shrugging off of ownership is other than / the letting-go of love, which is every moment turning from / the green translucent garden hose, the box of bathroom tiles…" (47). The lamp shapes, rubber boots, cinder blocks, television aerials, broken patio umbrellas, and all manner of other household items are present like the two-by-four with its peeled paint and its "gleam of momentariness, throat raised, the knife edge / incandescent with its failure, knowing itself failed, / and singing" (48). These objects are not fully meaningful in the context of a narrative, of any system of linguistic understanding. They fail as matter approached through the context of ownership. To see them singing in this failure, however, is to see them lyrically, it is to see them metaphorically as the process of an ecology where definition is constituted by their interrelation (with their environment, with the families who lived among them) rather than by their discrete origin as objects. The significance of Cashion Bridge to the speaker has no discrete beginning, no recount-able point of origin. Like the objects "singing" as a result of being apprehended lyrically, the bridge is an ecology of contexts, it is not reducible to an origin in meaning, or to an expression in language. The speaker notes the strangeness of the fact that she has never set foot on the other side of the bridge. I think this is consistent with her interest in approaching, in the process of relating: to cross the bridge is to, symbolically, seal the connection. To stand on the bridge without crossing is to balance on the relational potential of metaphoricity, it is to be in the act of reaching without grasping. The bridge, like the objects that have themselves bridged the length of five families, is an example of material metaphoricity, of an apprehension of matter that is constituted by difference, by openness to the non-systematic contexts of a failure to mean as a definitive object.

3. Rivers, Roads, and Railways: Don McKay

We might think of metaphor as the raven of language...

(Don McKay, *Vis à Vis*)

Like Jan Zwicky, Don McKay is interested in the articulated, irreducible differences that inhabit material objects despite our attempts to employ them physically and linguistically. It is metaphor, as he sees it, which is most attentive to these differences. For McKay metaphor is inextricably bound up with ethically "facing" the natural world. McKay re-figures Emmanuel Levinas's notion of the alterity of the other (which I consider in more detail next chapter) by thinking of it as "wilderness." "Wilderness," he points out, is "the capacity of all things to elude the mind's appropriations" (*Vis* 21). Metaphor, by employing language's totalizing capacity against itself, exposes the wilderness in meaning, in the systematic assumptions of linguistic knowing. McKay is keenly aware of the potential negative consequences of anthropomorphizing the natural world; however, he sees thoughtful metaphorical approaches to the nonhuman other as enacting the possibility of humility, of giving "a gift to the other from the dwelling you will never build there" (*Vis* 31). Thus, the nonhuman is approached through anthropomorphism as a kind of material metaphoricity, as a thing that is contingently cast in the structures of a logic that is always insufficient. Attending to the wilderness, to the material that escapes the mind's appropriations is to be engaged in an ethical domesticity inasmuch as the self is itself, is at home with itself, to the degree that it is open to the other, to wilderness: "We might try to sum up the paradox of home-making by saying that inner life *takes place*: it both *claims* place and acts to *become* a place among others. It turns wilderness into an interior and presents interiority to the wilderness" (*Vis* 23). The self is here metaphorically materialized and in so being it is articulated to its environment.

In McKay's poem "Three Eclogues" from the collection *Apparatus* materiality is explored in light of this articulation as the "beside" of things. That is, in each poem there is a dominant depiction of materialist interest, a river sectioned by private property, a highway and railway with their commercial transport; however, the "*this*ness" of things emerges in the unobserved margins (in the ditches, between the rails) and stands in resonant relation with the world. Each section of the poem involves a kind of accidental encounter with the nonhuman world that emphasizes the distinctness of the materiality of the nonhuman as a consequence of its resonant involvement in the world of the speaker, which is a world that is more than the speaker, a world not contained in a single language-game.

The first section muses upon the composition of a "book of beasts," a "bestiary of extinctions," in which "a place for ownership made absolute" is required and contrasted, in its "simple grid," with the looping limbs and reaching hands of the plant life on the river bank (51). This is the book that records our translations of the world, our employment of matter. Consequently, it raises the question of the role of linguistic thinking in determining material relations. How should the huge cedars, oaks, and pines, "(now beams and floors in Williamstown)," be represented, the speaker asks? (52). "And let the fly leaf read / This Book Shall Be My Trees," McKay writes at the end of the first section (52). Here the current of textual production is reversed; language, as pulp and paper, moves back into wood. The book, its lyricism, is the materiality of trees. Matter is encountered as metaphoricity, as things that "are" themselves only inasmuch as they "are not" circumscribable as objects in the language of distinction. Things are meaningful through connections and resonances between different phenomenal contexts and their provisional, lyrical expression.

In the second section of "Three Eclogues," the speaker is on his way to the post office to do the very material, public work of lyric: send out poems and hope for publication. He walks to the post office along the highway where various examples of materiality hurtle past and lie strewn in the ditches. There are the trucks that represent one view of matter: "They've been everywhere / and boxed it" (53). There is the Trans-Canada Highway itself as a "provider of dead meat" (55). There are even the tourist signs advertising the scenery of the St. John River valley in a kind of systematic, postcard/greeting-card manner: "The River Valley Trail, which calls Come Home / to tourists, leading the eye into the middle distance / where the hills fold into one another: Mom" (54).

It is when the speaker encounters a raven, however, that we get an antidote to the closed view of materiality that has so far concerned this section of the poem. The raven is seen as "utter raucous introverted music"; to think of the raven is to go "tumbling out of / thought"; it is to go "where language goes to fray back into air" (54). The lyrical drama established here involves the speaker imagining a conversation with the raven where language gets turned over, unearthed, emptied of any closed materialist pretensions. Indeed, the voices of both speaker and raven use air that is simply borrowed from the wind; thus, the matter of language is at once a lyrical "air" (of the atmosphere) and a provisional gift, a partial but intimate habitation. This is the lyric ethics of the poem's apprehension of matter: the metaphoricity of the speaker's relationship with the raven is an articulation among the two bodies and also with the larger, un-appropriable elemental.

The final section of "Three Eclogues" is a reminiscence in which the speaker recalls time spent in his youth walking the railway tracks. The materiality of the poem is formally resonant. The birds, the dog, the butterflies, the people, even the train, are all small atoms of concern; the yellow warbler with its "pointillist attention," Luke the dog with his mind on the train, the Monarch butterflies with their minds on that one valley in Mexico to which they migrate, the train with its commerce, its thundering interest in direction (57). The poem presents an epiphany by way of the speaker's boyhood reconciliation with the fact that the dog, after being hit by the train, returns again to chase it with unaffected zeal. The dog

> Back from the vet, stitched,
> still groggy from the drugs, he sensed the old throb
> troubling the air and struggled growling to his feet
> ready for round two. Talk about dumb. It was funny
> and appalling, and we knew, wincing at each other,
> that it wasn't just our true intrepid friend

> we were appalled by. When the Monarchs hatch
> they'll feed and flit and pollinate their hosts,
> by accident, and after an infinitude of flits
> wind up precisely in one Mexican valley. Some thoughts
> live in the mind as larvae, some as the milk they feed on,
> some as the wanderings which are the way. Heal-all,
> Yarrow. Everything the tracks
> have had no use for's happening
> between them. (58)

The imperative of the butterflies to return to Mexico, the dog's interest in the train, and the recollections of the speaker are all forms of desire for movement, for travel, be it the genetic travel of reproduction, the physical travel of play, or the nostalgic travel of memory. However, they are most of all approaches to matter whose very materiality is movement, that is to say elusive as an object in thought. The dog is a cautionary example of a world harrowingly resonant through the *this*ness of the thing. It is an example, perhaps, of resonance in a feedback loop. The dog's response to the imperative of the train has no systematic explanation: it is the epitome of the focused experience of the object. The necessary explanations of such behaviour are systems that live in the mind, teleologies that by consequence divide the world into things. The speaker recognizes at the end that these ways of thinking are as potentially destructive as they are seemingly illustrative of the functions of life. However, like the plants that grow among and beside the uncompromising direction of the train tracks, the materiality of the world emerges beside, and in spite of our systems of explanation. Matter here is apprehended in terms of metaphoricity inasmuch as it is perceived outside of the logic of objectification; things are in resonant relation with an accidental "infinitude of flits," where the materiality of that valley in Mexico is explainable only in the context of the world, in the context of the continuation of the lives of butterflies.

4. Notes on Matter: Jorie Graham

though there are, there really are,
things in the world, you must believe me.

(Jorie Graham, "Steering Wheel")

Graham's poem "Subjectivity" is in no small way about butterflies. As though distracted, however, by titles like "Subjectivity" and "Notes on the Reality of the Self," critics of Graham's work often fail to appreciate her work beyond its stated, ostensibly anthropocentric intentions. Despite her relative prominence in contemporary American poetry and her inclusion in such ecologically-minded anthologies as *The Forgotten Language: Contemporary Poets and Nature*, there is almost no ecocriticism on the works of Graham. What little that does exist is often highly critical of her "postmodern" tendencies and overtly philosophical concerns. Leonard Scigaj, for example, whose criticisms of Graham I briefly touched on in the last chapter, insists that Graham's work, at best, "is a complacent bourgeois elitism that cannot affirm our human potential for positive social action in the referential world" (59). Scigaj points out that Graham's book *Materialism* in particular raises consciousness about the problems with capitalism, but also gives in to the inevitability of violence in Western thinking, to the inevitability of colonization: "Graham's conception of history, of possible social action in the referential world, is fatalistic; agency is restricted to keeping the bourgeois domicile and nuclear family safe, and the only relief from the corrosive materialism is lonely anthropocentric introspection" (59). Of all of Graham's books, I would argue, to the contrary, *Materialism* is the one most concerned with the contingencies of history, with the openness in fatalistic narratives—especially as these relate to the natural world. In the poem "Young Maples in the Wind," for example, the speaker asks: "Dear history of this visible world, scuffling / at the edges of you is / no edge, no whereabout…" (136). History is frequently treated as an ecological structure itself; that is to say, events out of linear time are brought together by way of their resonant connection to the problems of thinking matter, of thinking "things." Consider the poem "Concerning the Right to Life," for example, where different temporal circumstances are juxtaposed moving from an encounter with a rose, to the cattle cars of the holocaust, to a child's illness, to a fierce storm, to Columbus's arrival in the new world. Contrary to Scigaj's assertions, *Materialism* is a book intensely concerned with the phenomenal world, with the matter of nature, and the matter of social lives. *Materialism* is a book that does not ignore the referential world, as Scigaj suggests, but interrogates the very meaning of what it means to refer.

I pointed out in the last chapter that the question of environmental ethics begins with the question of matter. In addition, I would add, any environmental ethic must be open not only to the matter of the world, but also to the matter of the self as constituted in relation to that world—it is people, after all, who are theorizing about the question of matter. The Emersonian conundrum that I discussed at the beginning concerns this difficulty in determining matter and determining the self in proximity to matter. *Materialism* is also an example of such reckonings: in Graham's poetry the material world is hinged to the world of the subject in such a way that what is taken to be matter includes the human and what is taken to be human includes the material. Graham is engaged with the limits of description, where the ostensible solidity of matter, its boundaries in language, is revealed to be insufficient. Thinking lyrically about things (about the self as a thing and the thing as a self), being open to articulations between seemingly disparate contexts, offers a view of materiality in the terms of metaphoricity, which is a conception of materiality open to resonant difference.

I begin my consideration of material metaphoricity in the poetry of Graham by briefly looking at the formal sympathies between Graham and Zwicky; both writers enact "ecological" structures in their work by incorporating excerpts into resonant relation with their own texts. Both share an interest in Wittgenstein that reinforces the relational metaphoricity at stake in thinking objects and language. Next, in light of thinking objects, I consider Helen Vendler's suggestion that in *Materialism* Graham turns the self into a thing. I argue, to the contrary, that rather than moving from one to the other, Graham's lyrics demonstrate that things and selves are interrelated in their constitution as material metaphoricity, and that what is at work in this articulation of self and world is a materiality resonantly open to difference, to non-systematic meaning. The complete series of five poems, all entitled "Notes on the Reality of the Self," demonstrate different perspectives in thinking materiality and thinking the self, culminating in a lyrical composition that underscores the metaphoricity of materiality at the level of the human and the nonhuman.

Both Jorie Graham and Jan Zwicky share similar formal and philosophical concerns as a consequence of their lyrical approaches to questions of materiality. In a manner formally sympathetic with Zwicky's philosophical works, *Lyric Philosophy* and *Wisdom and Metaphor*, Graham's *Materialism* includes excerpted texts from philosophers, theologians, scientists, and artists. Like Zwicky, Graham places the texts of other writers in proximity to her own, enacting the resonant connections between her own lyrical investigations into the nature of materiality and those of other writers. Graham begins her book with an "A Cappella" section where the voices of Sir Francis Bacon, Plato, Emerson, and Whitman are heard before her own poems.[5] This section is more than a series of epigraphs; it is, rather, presented as a composite poem unto itself and, consequently, implicates these voices at the very outset into the form and subject-matter of the book. These voices question the distinctions we make between the world of the visible and that of the invisible, they question our capacity to be near things, to really sense them, and they celebrate the incomprehensible appearances of cities, of phenomena.

Other voices occur periodically interspersed throughout the text of *Materialism*, sometimes as direct quotes and sometimes as what Graham calls "adaptations," which are edited, condensed, or re-worded versions of the originals. One of her touchstones in *Materialism* is the work of Wittgenstein. Helen Vendler goes so far as to suggest that Wittgenstein is the single most important philosopher to

Graham's verse ("Ascent" 7). There are two excerpts in *Materialism* from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Both are taken from a collection of statements extending from the second main proposition of the *Tractatus*: "What is the case—a fact—is the existence of states of affairs" (5). The first Wittgensteinian excerpt in *Materialism* concerns the idea of objects: "There must be objects, if the world is to have an unalterable form" (32). The second group of quotes, featured much later in Graham's book, is taken successively from almost exactly the point at which the previous excerpt left off. This section focuses on the relationship between pictures and reality: "Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture" (93). These two excerpts emphasize the relational concerns of object, image, language, and reality, which dominate Graham's book. For Wittgenstein, the appearance of matter (of a "fact," as Zwicky discusses it in "The Geology of Norway") in a state of affairs is always a negotiation among the relations of its pictorial reality. Similarly, in *Materialism* matter is hinged between its appearance as an object and its linguistic and extra-linguistic negotiation through poetry. The result is that matter, including the material contents of the book, is apprehended in the terms of metaphoricity; that is, the material of Graham's own work, her lyrics, are indissolubly interconnected to the environment of other writers, as their works emerge between and among her own. This is underscored, I would suggest, by the only direct Wittgensteinian quote that Graham's *Materialism* and Zwicky's *Lyric Philosophy* share (proposition 2.03): "In a state of affairs objects fit into one another like the links of a chain."[6] Indeed, thinking of objects in this manner and thinking objects lyrically in these two books is to reckon with their interconnection, their resonant involvement with each other and with the world. The fact that Wittgenstein employs a simile in this aphorism, an example of metaphorical thinking, ("like the links of a chain") reinforces the centrality of metaphorical relations to apprehensions of formal structures and materiality in the works of both Graham and Zwicky.[7]

In her book *The Given and the Made: Strategies of Poetic Redefinition* Helen Vendler argues that in *Materialism* Graham turns the self into a thing, conceives of the self in the terms of the material world. Vendler derives her argument from one section (the second) of Graham's five section "Notes on the Reality of the Self." I am sympathetic to Vendler's view that Graham's reckoning with materiality in the book (and of the book) reinforces a view of poetry as a form of matter, "as 'real' as other phenomena" (124). Vender adds: "Poems cannot, then, be sequestered as a form of the transcendent or the immaterial" (124). To see poetry as matter in this way is to apprehend material metaphoricity; it is to acknowledge the role of lyrical thinking in apprehending the reality of things. However, it is clear from Vendler's take on "Notes" that to see the self as matter is to see the self in discrete isolation. That is to say, Vendler's notion of matter is one that upholds atomistic distinctions; the material world is a world of indifferent separations. This view of matter, analogically equated as an "adequate symbol of ourselves," (that is, to see the self wholly in the terms of matter; a one to one substitution) is cause for fear because of its discrete parameters: "If one imagines human beings as matter, then one is struck by despair at one's own limitations" (125, 127). While it may be the case that the second section of "Notes" presents an ostensible dynamic of material isolation, where the band music, the leaves of the magenta bushes, and the wind are all held apart from each other, dumbly negotiating a space in which each is not present to the other's reality, I argue that this section of "Notes" must be seen in the context of all five sections and, indeed, in the context of other poems in the book, such as "Subjectivity" and "Young Maples in the Wind" that directly address not only the issues at stake in the poem, but also the material details of "Notes" (wind, tress, and subjectivity). Vendler admits in her book, which was published shortly after the appearance of *Materialism*, that her investigations are necessarily premature given the lack of time in which to fully assimilate all the new poems (122). Taking more of the book into consideration, I want to contextualize the second section of "Notes" in light of the full five poems in the sequence. It is my contention that each poem takes a different approach to similar questions of materiality and to the materiality of the self, ultimately culminating in a highly lyrical approach to matter in the final poem that underscores the material metaphoricity of the self in relation to and as a consequence of its material environment.

The five "Notes on the Reality of the Self" poems are scattered throughout *Materialism*. They constitute a developing lyrical engagement with the notion of matter and the notion of the self. Due to the fact that the poems all share the same title, we are invited to consider them as different but resonantly connected; their identical titles subvert the traditional discrete distinctions between poems in a book.

As a consequence, "Notes," as poetic material, is an amalgamation, or an ecology, of different lyrical approaches. The first poem, which begins the book (immediately following the "A Cappella" section) opens with the image of a river. The concern with watching rivers, with accounting for the descriptions of their phenomena is also how the book ends in the poem "The Surface." The river is an appropriate metaphor for Graham's material deliberations because of the difference that constitutes its sameness, the emphasis on process over content. This opening "Notes" poem deals with the question of material presence, of its presence in language versus its presence in the context of its own processes. The poem presents us with the problem of fixing things in the stability of meaning, of a non-illusory reality: "All things are / possible. Last year's leaves, coming unstuck from shore, / rippling suddenly again with the illusion, / and carried, twirling, shiny again and fat, / towards the quick throes of another tentative / conclusion…" (3). Matter fails to be "virtual"; it fails to yield to the linguistic attempt at fixing its meaning: "Expression pouring forth, all content no meaning. / The force of it and the thingness of it identical" (3). The equation between force and thing here underscores how the process by which things exist, their dynamic associations with environmental circumstances, are implicated in their presence. A thing is not reducible to its presence as an object; rather, the process by which it comes to be, the structure of its relations with the rest of the world are fundamentally involved in its material presence. The speaker struggles with how to represent this: "How the invisible / roils. I see it from here and then / I see it from here. Is there a new way of looking— / valences and little hooks—inevitabilities, proba- / bilities?" (3). The speaker moves seamlessly from inquiring about the difficulty involved in representing the thing-ness of the river and the leaves to questioning the material certainty of her own body and its discrete construction in language: "Is this body the one / I know as me? How private these words? And these?" (3). To what degree do words (their privacy with respect to reference, their ability to point to just this one thing) create isolated objects when they are used to define things, to what degree do they make things separate from other things? The poem metaphorically links the non-systematic material articulations of the river and the leaves, and the struggle to represent this reality, with the involvement of the body, of the self, in the extra-logical ecology of material process. The body, like the river, is not an object fully fixed in language, or at least fully fixed in the language of systematic meaning. To think about these things otherwise is to think lyrically; it is to think "*the evidence of the visual henceforth*—and henceforth, loosening—" (4).

The second section of "Notes," however, emphasizes that to think lyrically, in the terms of metaphoricity, is also to think distinction amidst connection. In fact, the poem reinforces, as Vendler points out, the unassailable distinctions between things. However, rather than considering this emphasis on separation as a terminal argument for the alienation inherent in the material world, I think the poem serves to underscore the articulatory dynamic of matter, its *this*ness. The poem opens with a neat, direct description of its central protagonists: the bushes, the band, the fading autumn light, and the wind. All of this, however, is contained within the possessive personal pronoun "my," the back yard of the speaker; the self, its property, as it were, is constituted by these material foci.

> In my bushes facing the bandpractice field,
> in the last light, surrounded by drumbeats, drumrolls,
> there is a wind that tips the reddish leaves
> exactly all one way, seizing them up from underneath, making them
> barbarous in unison. (10)

This unison, however, is only one way of looking at the relationship of these materials to each other. The poem proceeds to contradict its own direction by enacting the articulations of metaphoricity in its formal structure, by emphasizing the "is" and "is not" of its comparisons: "Meanwhile the light insists they glow / where the wind churns, or, no, there is a wide gold corridor / of thick insistent light, layered with golds, as if runged, / as if laid low from the edge of the sky" (10). The poem regroups, re-posits its associations in an engagement with the limits of description, with the resistance of the scene to abide a system of representation. Vendler points out in *The Given and the Made* that, in its insufficiency, language "begins its drawing of distinctions" (126). Vendler goes on to argue, as I mentioned, that this drawing of distinctions mirrors the isolation that the material foci of the poem suffer. Consequently, in her view, to regard the self as a thing is to see it similarly isolated.

It is true that the poem does culminate in a scene in which the wind, band music, bushes, and light are all tangled in one drama and yet unable to engage with the apparent existence of each other: "scintillant beast the bushes do not know exists / as the wind beats them, beats in them, beats around them, / them in a wind that does not really even now / exist…" (11). However, I would argue that this view of matter is initiated by a question about the nature of reality in the poem; it is, more significantly, initiated by an expectation that reality will mean in a stable way. "Tell me," the speaker asks, "where are the drumbeats which fully load and expand / each second, / bloating it up, cell-like, making it real, where are they / to go, what will *they* fill up…" (10-11). What is reality for the speaker? It does not, as evidenced by the first part of the poem, submit to her language, her system of reference. The only way she can describe her yard, the body in which this phenomenal drama unfolds, is, as I pointed out above, to posit and then retract, it is to engage the metaphorical structural dynamic of "is like" and "is not like." I would argue that the material isolation at the end of the poem is the result of the speaker's attempt to "make it real" according to her desire for stable meaning. Zwicky reminds us in *Wisdom and Metaphor* that metaphor marks an explicit refusal that the most fundamental ontological characteristic of things is their distinctness (L59). Their distinctness is only *one* of their characteristics, whereas interpenetration and connectedness are the others. The question about reality that the poem posits is a rhetorical break from the provisional doing and undoing of descriptions that has come before. In making the material foci of the poem mean in a "real" sense at the end of the poem, the speaker can only linguistically account for their distinctness, for their alienation from each other. The dynamic of metaphoricity, as I mentioned before, requires that there be distinct objects in the world, that that be one way in which they may be encountered. In the quest for material reality, the speaker does not apprehend things in the terms of metaphoricity. Whereas Vendler sees this as evidence of an isolated notion of the self as matter, I see it as a critique of the quest to fix the reality of matter and the reality of the self, all the while demonstrating, prior to the imperative to "make it real," that matter means outside of the strictures of linguistic systems, outside of the speaker's capacity for description.

The poem ends with distinct things. The fact that they do not make sense to each other in a way that satisfies the speaker's desire for a depiction of reality is not evidence that they are not resonantly engaged in the materiality of each other. The wind beating in and around the bushes does so not in a way meaningful to the speaker, but it does so in the context of all the other material foci interacting with each other in the body of the speaker's attention, which is an attention to the world and to her sense of herself. These resonant connections to the larger structure of the world are suggestive of an apprehension of matter as *this*ness. That is, each of these materials, wind, band, bushes, and light, are distinct, but their "rolling, patterning, measuring" interactions with each other suggest a larger, extra-logical connection to the "reality of the self." While ostensibly arguing for a self that is discrete matter, this poem reminds us that this view of matter is an incomplete apprehension of the reality of things. The *this*ness of things, hinted at in the end, requires that we take a more metaphorical approach to matter.

The third and fourth sections of "Notes" are indeed more metaphorically driven. One juxtaposes the act of a man in a bakeshop about to cut into a loaf of bread with a felled tree in a moonlit forest. The other, involving references to Constantin Stanislavsky's *Building a Character*, explores the donning of costumes and the difficulty of determining identity. Both of these poems involve the reversals and adjustments to descriptive language that characterize the first part of the second "Notes" poem. Both poems also undermine the certainty of perception. Ultimately, both of these poems reinforce the articulated view of materiality inherent in lyric thinking.

In the third poem the capacity to see beauty is an example of lyrical apprehension; it is ostensibly that which leads one to definition, to narrative, to finding the lost path back to the felled tree in the forest. However, it is also a vision locked within the self behind closed eyes and hence constituted by a view of the materiality of the self open to "empty spaces" and "hollows" (13). The reality of the self and the reality of the world are metaphorically connected in finding the tree, losing it, and finding it again. The poem enacts its own metaphorical hinge between conscious and unconscious, reality and imagination, domestic and wilderness: the man's materiality is indissolubly linked to the ecology of his imaginative world.

The fourth "Notes" poem is similarly concerned with metaphoricity. The constitution of the self is metaphorically explored through the building of a character in a dramatic context. The donning of a costume, in this case a morning-coat, is the assumption of a character. But this engagement with things, with the materiality of props, raises questions about identity and substance without simply alienating the self from its environment. By adopting the costume the self is not turned into an inert thing isolated from the matter surrounding it; rather, the garment becomes involved with who the character is, with the self's sense of its own existence in relation to others: "the garment—how it becomes you!—starry with the eyes of / others, / weeping—" (61). The poem enacts the apprehension of the self as material metaphoricity.

The final poem in the "Notes on the Reality of the Self" sequence is the most overt expression of a lyrical engagement with matter and with the self. The poem is an arrangement of that most concentrated of lyrical forms: the haiku. In this poem haikus by Shiki, Issa, Buson, and Kyroai are strung together as stanzas in one poem. The author, Graham, is present simply as a conductor of relations, as the force which has placed these stanzas in articulatory relationship. Thus the very materiality of authorship, in the context of the poem, involves others.[8] In addition, this poem involves many of the elemental and domestic concerns that are present in earlier "Notes" poems: the autumn wind, the making of rice-cakes (which is suggestive of the bread in section three), various scarecrows (which are suggestive of the role of costumes in section four), and the omnipresence of sound (which is suggestive of the band music in the second section). Instead of existing apart from each other in isolated dynamics, these elements and domestic circumstances interact with each other, making the reality of the self an ecological structure:

> Two houses!
> Two houses making rice-cakes:
> Autumn rain.
>
> The autumn wind is blowing;
> We are alive and can see each other.
> You and I.
>
> The owner of the field
> Goes to see how the scarecrow is,

And comes back. (128)

The reality of the self is no longer expressible in the logic of discrete distinction; the self is hinged to the other, the You to the I, the house to the other house, the scarecrow to the field owner. Indeed, materiality in this poem, as an expression of reality, is apprehended in the terms of metaphoricity. Things stand in a relation that is not a union but a relation where they maintain their difference, where the autumn rain invades the rice-cake making, where the wind comes between You and I, where the owner and scarecrow meet and part.

It is not the case that Graham turns the self into a thing dumbly unengaged with the rest of the world in the sequence "Notes on the Reality of the Self." If we consider the five poems together, as different approaches to similar dilemmas, it is possible to see them as examples of matter apprehended in the terms of material metaphoricity. The self is a resonant structure; it is a material fabric hinged between the visible and the invisible, the external and internal, the human and nonhuman. To understand the reality of the self is to make leaps between paradoxical contexts, it is to exceed the systems of linguistic logic. The nonhuman material world and the reality of the self both are and are not distinct realms. Their relationship is paradoxical, a leap of illogical associations, and yet it is also a relationship that maintains the tensions of connection. In an interview with Michael Silverblatt filmed by the Lannan Foundation, Graham describes poetry as the crucible for these contradictory, illogical tensions and sees them as inhabiting the reality of humans generally. It is "image clusters" and illogical associations that carry "all this language…so that we have this fantastic sensation of paradoxical information…I think that that is one of the sensations that most people feel in reality, and that poetry can give it to them." Poetry, in this case, gives us access to reality not through direct representation but by embodying the paradoxical articulations of non-systematic thinking. Moreover, in a description highly reminiscent of Zwicky's notion of resonance, Graham goes on to describe the "overtones" that poems create, the leaps they inspire between contexts: "as in a plucked string the overtones are at certain intervals." If the self is material, and if as material it is involved in the paradoxical realities of our lives, then the rigid categorical limits of matter must be reconsidered. Like Zwicky's "Geology of Norway" and "Cashion Bridge," as well as McKay's "Three Eclogues," "Notes on the Reality of the Self" is an example of such reconsiderations through the apprehension of material metaphoricity.

5. Examples

What I think *of the world?*
Call me later.

(Eirin Moure, *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person*)

These poems by Zwicky, McKay and Graham are, like metaphoricity itself, exemplary. Giorgio Agamben discusses the "example" in his book *The Coming Community* as a linguistic being that radically calls its own linguistic identity into question. Early in *The Coming Community* he identifies the "example" as that which serves neither the particular nor the general: "On the one hand, every example is treated in effect as a real particular case; but on the other, it remains understood that it cannot serve in its particularity. Neither particular nor universal, the example is a singular object that presents itself as such, that *shows* its singularity" (10). The place of the example, Agamben says, "is always beside itself, in the empty space in which its undefinable and unforgettable life unfolds" (10). For Agamben the being in example is linguistic being because the being-called defines the example. The tree is not "birch," but it is "called-birch," that is, it is not defined by "birch," but, as an example, it is located by being called "birch." However, it is also this being-called that brings it into question—it cannot be exhaustively accounted for by the word "birch." Metaphor, as Zwicky reminds us, is a resonant connection that transgresses the systematic parameters of language-games. That is to say that metaphor, metaphoricity, the operative dynamic of metaphor, is an articulation between, or beside, the being-called of linguistic thinking. The example as such, beside itself, is not tied to any common property or identity. Agamben calls this the place of "Whatever" singularity; it is a space of potentiality, a space resistant to attempts at defining the material. This is not to say that there is no real world, but that the "*this*ness" of things, as Zwicky terms it in *Wisdom and Metaphor*, requires a metaphorical understanding; it is not given in the language of definitions and names.

What is the materiality of an example? It both is and is not the thing it is asked to represent. To approach Agamben's Whatever through the example is, according to Thomas Carl Wall in his book *Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot, and Agamben*, "to approach an ever-elsewhere that is not absent, an ever-here that is not present" (124). This inherent hinge in the ontology of the example underscores the metaphoricity that inhabits its structural dynamic, the metaphoricity that is an expression of its material reality. The lyrical approaches to matter in the human world and the nonhuman world that I have discussed in the poetry of Zwicky, McKay, and Graham are exemplary inasmuch as they approach the question of materiality through the resonant articulations of metaphoricity. Moreover, the very exploration of the example in Agamben's work shares much in the way of form with McKay's variations on motion and desire in "Three Eclogues" and Graham's palimpsest-like reorientations of the question of self in "Notes on the Reality of the Self." Agamben's book *The Coming Community* is laid out in short aphoristic sections that return to the same issues of existence, language, and meaning through different perspectives, enacting a repetition-with-variation form. In this way the book is not unlike Zwicky's *Lyric Philosophy* in terms of its internal resonant structure, to say nothing of its lyrical approach to philosophical writing.

I close this chapter with the example in mind because it captures at once the way that I want these poets to stand in relation to my own work and the significance of lyric poetry to my thinking about ethics. Zwicky, McKay, and Graham are not meant to be systematic representations of my theory of lyric ethics. They are rather, examples, with all of the metaphoricity that the term implies. I discuss their poetry in relation to lyric ethics because I see their work as resonantly connected to the formal dynamics at stake in the metaphorical structures I am proposing. There are as many important distinctions between these three writers as there are similarities. Their writing is exemplary for my project for the ways in which their works live at the edges of description, at that place where language and non-language are hinged together. This is by no means a restricted locale; indeed, much lyric (and for that matter, non-lyric) poetry is also engaged with such limits. What sets these writers apart and what is most relevant to my discussion are the ways in which their works share an engagement with explicit questions of matter, ethics, time, and, most importantly, metaphor. Their similarities with respect to matter have already been addressed in this chapter—discussions in more detail of ethics and time will follow. Metaphor permeates all of these discussions. I want to think of my engagement with these poets as attending to their exemplarity; I do not want to make totalized objects of their work. They are metaphors for my take on ethics—in all of the articulatory openness that the term metaphor implies.

The example is also important more generally to what I see as lyric poetry's relationship to ethics. As I mentioned at the closing of the last chapter, lyric ethics is not an applied ethics; it cannot be a set of rules for approaching the natural world or the question of the environment. It is lyric poetry's capacity as an example that allows it to assert the imperative of lyric thinking without offering a system of ethical activism. As an example, a lyric poem, in terms of its metaphoricity, is at once a linguistic composition and also an engagement with the outside of language, with the extra-logical. A lyric poem, the attention it demands, is in short, an example of the space of Whatever being; it points to that place beside the linguistic systems of reference. In its capacity for metaphoricity, lyric interrupts the precise properties of predication, but it also does not neglect the particulars in favour of a closed totality.

Agamben compares the Whatever that inhabits the example as "love": "Love," he notes, "is never directed toward this or that property of the loved one (being blond, being small, being tender, being lame), but neither does it neglect the properties in favor of an insipid generality (universal love): The lover wants the loved one *with all of its predicates*, its being such as it is" (*Coming* 2). The structural dynamic of metaphoricity is constituted by such articulations between the particular and the general. As the operative dynamic in the lyric poem, metaphoricity, like exemplarity, like the place of the Whatever singularity, encourages an apprehension of things that attends to the whole thing, but does not render it intelligible in systematic terms according to its particulars: the "whatever singularity (the Lovable) is never the intelligence of some thing, of this or that quality or essence, but only the intelligence of intelligibility" (2). Lyric poetry similarly does not present us with a view of materiality that presupposes objective presence; rather it compels us to think about how we think about matter, about our intelligibility of the world. In this way lyric poetry, as a species of lyric thinking, as an apprehension in the terms of metaphoricity, is an example of ethics.

Notes

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[1] Parts of this chapter have been previously published in the following publications: Dickinson, Adam. "Lyric Ethics: Ecocriticism, Material Metaphoricity, and the Poetics of Don McKay and Jan Zwicky." *Canadian Poetry* 55 (2004): 34-52; Dickinson, Adam. "The Rhythm of Happening: Antagonism and Community in Brenda Longfellow's *Our Marilyn* and *A Balkan Journey*." *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*. 12.1 (2003): 38-56.

[2] See especially Tim Lilburn's collection of essays, *Living In The World As If It Were Home* (Cormorant Books, 1999). Lilburn is deeply engaged with many of the questions about poetry and philosophy that interest Zwicky and McKay; however, more directly than these writers, his writing often concerns explicitly theological questions.

[3] In *Wisdom and Metaphor* Zwicky not only connects the Wittgensteinian concept of "seeing-as" to its obvious metaphorical implications, but suggests that understanding itself has the form of seeing-as: "The experience of understanding something is always the experience of a gestalt – the dawning of an aspect that is simultaneously a perception or reperception of a whole" (*WM* L2). For Zwicky, thinking that aims at understanding (in its activity of "seeing-as") is a form of resistance to the linguistic orthodoxy of reference (*WM* L46).

[4] In her introduction to the poem's first publication in the *Harvard Review of Philosophy*, Zwicky acknowledges that the voice of the poem "is apparently familiar with both poststructuralist narratology and plate tectonics, neither of which was really on the scene when Wittgenstein died in 1951" (30). She adds that she hopes, nonetheless, that the poem's trajectory is "Wittgensteinian." Why does Zwicky play with time in this way? Without getting into too much detail here (see Chapter Five), it is my contention that Zwicky's employment of archives (as evidenced in her philosophical works as well as her poetry) is an example of the material metaphoricity I have been talking about; that is to say, the archive is explored in her work as a metaphorically resonant structure, temporally and materially.

[5] The quote from Emerson in "A Cappella" is taken from the later "Nature" essay (1844) and includes some of the material I quoted in the introduction to this chapter.

[6] This quote from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (2.03) is reproduced in Graham's *Materialism* on page 32, and in Zwicky's *Lyric Philosophy* on page R27.

[7] I want to include similes under the rubric of metaphorical thinking. I agree with Jan Zwicky when she notes in *Wisdom and Metaphor* that "Similes and analogies, too, are metaphorical in the sense I am concerned with. The 'like' in such figures is merely a nod in the direction of the strict metaphor's implicit 'is not'" (L5).

[8] These haikus are translations (Graham does not indicate the source), which underscores the "ecology of authorship" at work in Graham's arrangement of the poems. Moreover, translation itself enacts the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. In Chapter Three I discuss Don McKay's contention that anthropomorphism is a form of translation. Translation is not about the reduction of the natural world into systems of language as much as it is about the self-conscious limitations of any single language-game. In this way, translation is an example of the relational metaphoricity between self and other.

3. LYRIC ETHICS

Sunlight doesn't know what it does
And, as such, doesn't goof up, and is ordinary and good.

(Erin Mouré, *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person*)

...instead of being, *Man* figures.

(Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*)

1. *Prima Facie*

We have arrived at the hinge of this project, its ecological centre. I intend the following discussion about lyric ethics to serve as a connection between my previous remarks about material metaphoricity in the first two sections and my discussion of temporality and archives in the last two sections. While my focus in this chapter is principally on questions of materiality—ranging from the disciplinary integrity of ethical literary criticism, to the idea of the subject in the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas, to the inflection of Levinasian "things" and "elements" toward the nonhuman other in the writings of Don McKay—temporality is an omnipresent concern, and issues alluded to in the following discussion are developed in more detail in later chapters. It is appropriate to pursue a comprehensive discussion of what I mean by lyric ethics at this juncture, between matter and time, between the beginning and the end, because it is this very interstitial character of the relational dynamic of lyric ethics that I want to enact.

Having discussed ecocriticism earlier, I begin this chapter by examining the issue of ethical literary criticism. Charles Altieri's essay "Lyrical Ethics and Literary Experience" presents a point of departure for discussing the relationship between lyric and ethics by characterizing the imaginative encounter made possible by lyrical experiences in the terms, I argue, of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. Next, I consider one of the few recent attempts to explicitly bring ethics and metaphor together: Mark Johnson's book *The Moral Imagination*. Despite his acknowledgement of the importance of metaphor to moral deliberations, the claims he makes for metaphor are systematic and ultimately rely upon a schematic substitution model of pre-existing forms. Nonetheless, aspects of his thinking (such as his employment of "transperspectivity") are useful for the way that I propose to think the metaphoricity of the ethical relationship. In the next and largest section of this chapter I argue for the importance of metaphor and metaphoricity in the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas because I see Levinas's work as expressing the links between lyric and ethics, in the context of materiality and temporality, for which I have been arguing. I focus first on the implications for material metaphoricity in Levinas's early work *Time and the Other*. Next I argue that the question of the "feminine" in his work highlights the important role of metaphoricity in an ethics that attempts to work in the lyrical interstice between substance and non-substance, between the literal and the figurative, between the "said" and the "saying." Even where his own work is at odds with my own, for example, in his sexism, and in his book *Difficult Freedom* (specifically the essay "Persons or Figures," where he argues explicitly against the idea of the "figure"), Levinas's writing points toward the centrality of lyrical thinking to the relational question of ethics. I close this chapter by arguing that McKay's writings on poetics (particularly his essay "Baler Twine") inflect aspects of the way Levinas thinks "things" and "elements" in order to refigure an ethical approach to the nonhuman world through the anthropomorphic gift of the face. I briefly engage Martin Buber's I-You relation in his book *I and Thou* in order to further strengthen my claims that McKay's employment of anthropomorphism is an example of lyric ethics. To begin, however, let me explain how my notion of lyric ethics fits into the larger discipline of ethical literary criticism.

2. Ethical Literary Criticism

In his essay entitled "Lyrical Ethics and Literary Experience" Charles Altieri confesses his unease with the way philosophers employ literature to make claims about moral and political truths. Specifically problematic for him is the tendency to reduce the expansive imaginative range of literary experience to a series of definitive moral values. He is also aware, however, of the potential arrogance of the literary critic invested in the "marvelous complexity" of his or her enterprise and, consequently, appalled at its "oversimplification" in the hands of another discipline like moral philosophy (44). Altieri worries "that by asking literary criticism to pursue clearly defined, public ethical ends we risk losing sight of what are usually the most compelling and most persuasive experiential qualities the relevant texts produce" (44-45). Our engagement with imaginative texts, our response to lyricism, is, for Altieri, an encounter with the limits of reasoned systematic thinking. This experience does not fit easily into definable moral categories; nonetheless, these imaginative engagements offer us valuable insights into the ethical potentialities of "those states that attentive pleasure makes available" (31).

Altieri's claims are relevant to my theory of lyric ethics for several reasons. First, his characterization of the imaginative encounter made possible by lyrical experiences expresses the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity—moreover, it expresses it as an ethical function. Second, his critique of the metaphors of literary ethical models, as well as his ambivalence regarding the enterprise of ethical literary criticism, underscores the hinged ontology—that is to say the existence as a discipline—of the very project of lyric ethics, which is consistent with ethical apprehensions of materiality that I discussed in the previous chapters. I do disagree, however, with Altieri's claims about Levinasian ethics. Where he sees Levinas as re-inscribing ethical categories ("letting be"), I see Levinas's philosophy making possible a conception of ethics founded on lyricism and, in terms of its very dynamic, ecological responsibility.

Altieri describes the imaginative encounter made possible by lyrical experiences in a way that is consistent with what I have been proposing is the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. Our experience of lyric is not an apprehension of one version of ethos, of a single, narcissistic state; rather, the "I" of lyric is hinged between divergent contexts. In our imaginative participation with the text, Altieri points out that "[e]xcess lies down with extreme, precise care; no wonder creation shivers" (47). The lyric experience involves an articulation between the general and the particular, between abstract and concrete compulsions to care. It permits us, through the act of reading, a connection that is also a separation from the apprehended values of the text, which allows us both intimate association as well as the maintenance of "the distance necessary to make judgments" (43). This articulation between contexts, between the particularities of the text and its larger, inexpressible, excessive, but affective meanings, is not simply important because of its dynamic of metaphoricity, but also because it is ethical. The imaginative engagement with lyric is capable, for Altieri, of "directly affecting our experience of values without our having to postulate those underlying reasons" (46). This articulation is ethical precisely because it does not concern the presupposition of a fixed and systematically knowable world; rather, as Altieri points out, "What matters is not what we come to know about the world but what our participation in the poem makes available as concrete, elemental abstraction" (50). He goes on to point out that "it is reason that must learn to accommodate states like those that the poem can make so intensely real and so appealing as representations of what the desire for desire might look like in its pure form" (50). The importance of lyric to ethics is the engagement it enacts beside reason, the connections it makes outside the strictures of analytic logic. As Altieri points out, we need to live in a reasoned world where we can make judgments according to accurate information; however, "much of our lives takes place on quite different planes where justifications can be assumed or where they are clearly after the fact....In these domains the worry about what is right is less pressing than the need to discover what is possible for us to feel and to project and even to speculate upon" (51). Much like the tensions I discussed earlier between realism and metaphor and linguistic and non-linguistic thinking, lyric, I want to emphasize in light of Altieri, through its dynamic of metaphoricity, rides the hinge that separates the question of the good from the question of one's comportment to the question of the question of the good. Lyric ecologically links these positions in a way that both binds and separates, requiring us to think of ethics in the way that I have earlier proposed we think of matter—as lyrical, as metaphoricity.

The second principal reason for Altieri's relevance to my project is his critique of the metaphors of literary ethical models, as well as his ambivalence regarding the enterprise of ethical literary criticism. Altieri rejects Wayne Booth's metaphor of the "text as friend" as a model for approaching ethical literary criticism. In presenting his objections, Altieri notes that what we desire of texts is not always friendship but also a degree of antagonism and a host of other relations; the metaphor of the text as friend fails to capture the myriad of complex and paradoxical relations we have with texts (52). Rather, Altieri seeks to replace the figure of the friend not with another metaphor, but with an attention, I would argue, to the metaphoricity of the imaginative engagement at stake. As I mentioned earlier, I am less interested in individual metaphors than with the dynamic of metaphoricity itself; it is the potentialities of this structural relation that is at stake in ethical apprehensions of the world, not the appropriateness of any one metaphor. Consequently, Altieri's interest here in subverting the authority of a potentially totalized metaphorical approach to the question of literary ethical criticism by advocating not another metaphor, but an attention to the paradoxical articulatory dynamic of the experience itself is consistent with how I propose we understand lyric ethics.

In addition, Altieri's suspicion about the categorical stability of "ethical literary criticism" underscores his resistance to a fixed, programmatic notion of the discipline itself. He notes that "the best way to appreciate all that lyricism involves may be simply to reflect on why there might be good reasons to remain in constant struggle against ethical criticism" (45). In other words, our relationship to ethical literary criticism through lyric enacts metaphoricity inasmuch as such criticism both "is" and "is not" at once. The consequences of what Altieri is suggesting here resonate with my earlier discussion of metaphorical approaches to the question of materiality. Inasmuch as ethical literary criticism is a thing, it is also not itself—at least it is not itself in the discrete language of representation. Moreover, as I mentioned at the close of the first chapter, my understanding of lyric ethics is not as an applied ethics. In this way it is not a critical template that can be superimposed on events or situations or texts to determine ethical priority. Rather, lyric ethics is an attention not reducible to code or description. Its ethics is in its capacity for focusing our attention on the ecological relationship between the linguistic and the non-linguistic, the logical and extra-logical, the being and the becoming.

While it is my contention that there is much in Altieri's essay that lends implicit support to my claims about the centrality of metaphoricity to conceiving of the ethics of lyric, there are also significant points of difference. In particular, I am not interested in thinking of lyric ethics as a way of *doing literary criticism*. Rather, it is my aim to argue for the ethical implications of lyrical thinking, of lyrical apprehensions of the world. It is to these ends that I am interested in the works of Zwicky, McKay, and Graham. It is not my intention to apply a critical template to these writers; rather, I wish to see them as "exemplary" (as I have discussed in light of Giorgio Agamben) in terms of the ethical attention to things that they demonstrate. While Altieri recognizes the difficulty with specifically defining an ethical literary criticism, and while his essay gestures towards the importance of lyrical states of thinking, he does not develop this idea beyond some of the preliminary claims that I have already identified.

The most significant difference between my own claims about lyric ethics and Altieri's discussion of ethical criticism hinges on his dismissal of what he calls "Deconstructive and Levinasian ethical criticism," which Altieri accuses of turning the idea of "letting be" into a moral category (36). In other words, the suspicion of category threatens to become a category itself. While I do not disagree with Altieri's challenge to this kind of ethical criticism and his yearning for a reckoning with particularity in place of indiscriminate suspicion, I do dispute his inclusion of Levinas under such a rubric.[1] In his essay "Is Ontology Fundamental?" Levinas critiques Heidegger for affirming the impersonal character of being-in-the-world. He also critiques Heidegger's suggestion that our relation to others is a "letting be"; rather, Levinas argues that we cannot have a relation with the other without addressing the other in all his/her/its personal particularity. Thus, there is already present in

Levinas's ethical approach an attentiveness to particularity; indeed, the particular affective predicament of the other is what we respond to in the face to face encounter.

I want to argue in the following pages that Levinas's philosophy of ethics, and his associated conceptions of materiality, are lyrical in the way that I have been describing lyric (with metaphoricity as its operative dynamic). Indeed, despite his insistence that the "face" is not a metaphor, and his platonic suspicions of the poetic image, I argue that metaphor is central to the ecological dynamic that is the face to face encounter. Moreover, Levinas's approach to materiality, specifically in his book *Time and the Other*, is one that apprehends matter lyrically—the very materiality of the self involves the other, the self both "is" and "is not." It is also my contention that the metaphoricity inherent in Levinas's ethics provides an ecological model for conceiving of relationships with otherness that extend to the natural world. While Levinas never explicitly explores this possibility in his work, it is my claim that his ethics, from the perspective of its lyrical dynamic, enables a responsible approach to the nonhuman world. Before considering Levinas, however, I examine Mark Johnson's attempt to bring metaphor and moral philosophy together in his book *Moral Imagination*. While aspects of his theory are useful, his employment of metaphor is restricted to the logic of systems, or what Levinas would call a return to the "same."

3. Morals and Metaphors: Exploding all the Books in the World

The whirlwind is in the thorn tree;
It's hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

(Johnny Cash, "The Man Comes Around")

It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference.

(Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Ethics, Life and Faith")

In his lecture on ethics (collected and published as "Ethics, Life and Faith") Ludwig Wittgenstein remarks that to write a book on ethics in a scientific manner would require a work of such sublimity that Wittgenstein confesses he can only expresses his feelings on the matter by employing a metaphor: "this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world" (291). Indeed, metaphor and metaphorical issues make frequent appearances in Wittgenstein's lecture. The reason for this is twofold; first, ethics resists explanation through conventional language; second, as I explain momentarily, the metaphoricity of simile is important to the very dynamic of what Wittgenstein understands as ethics. In his lecture, Wittgenstein distinguishes between the way we use the word "right," or "good" in a trivial or relative sense and the way we use it to express ethical ideals. If we say that someone is a good tennis player, it is only to suggest that according to parameters or limits, this player fulfills expectations—he or she is good according to the limits of a system. On the other hand, to talk abstractly about the ethical good is an enterprise outside of systematic logic, outside of explanation according to our use of words as vessels for meaning: "Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts" (291).

Metaphors are required not simply as a means to approach this "supernatural," linguistically unavailable realm of ethics, but are also intrinsic to the speaking of ethical language. Wittgenstein argues that one of the defining characteristics of religious or ethical language is its use of similes. To pray to God, he suggests, is to engage in an allegorical relationship that presents God in the human world, in the language of human speech. Therefore, Wittgenstein argues, these similes, this allegorical language must always refer to something else beyond itself. However, he points out, "as soon as we try to drop the simile and simply to state the facts which stand behind it, we find that there are no such facts. And so what at first appeared to be a simile now seems to be mere nonsense" (294). As I have discussed previously, I think of the operative, relational dynamic of simile as an example of metaphoricity.[2] Here, Wittgenstein underscores not only the problem with trying to analytically explain metaphors, but also how metaphorical dynamics are central to thinking religious and ethical issues. He acknowledges the difficulty of making sense of the fact that nonsense can be an expression of fact and in doing so underscores the articulatory nature of metaphoricity: "'It is the paradox that an experience, a fact, should seem to have supernatural value'" (294). Indeed, for Wittgenstein the "nonsensicality" of religious and ethical statements is "their very essence" (296).

The significance of Wittgenstein's remarks rests both in the acknowledgement of what I have been calling metaphoricity as an essential element of ethical language, and in the acknowledgment that while ethical language is not systematic and analytically available it is no less meaningful. In pointing out that ethics cannot be a science, Wittgenstein confesses in his lecture that ethics is no less significant: "it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it" (296). Wittgenstein's thoughts on this matter are a useful introduction to many of the central concerns of Mark Johnson's book *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* because Johnson's work also addresses the schism between ethics and reason, the relationship between ethics and aesthetics, and the centrality of metaphorical thinking to moral situations. I am interested in focusing on Johnson's book because it is the most explicit contemporary example of an attempt to bring together the theory and function of metaphor with ethical philosophy. While the larger issue of the relationship between ethics and aesthetics has received increasing critical notice, particular attention to the form and function of metaphor in this context has been largely neglected.

Mark Johnson previously worked with George Lakoff on the book *Metaphors We Live By*, which I discussed earlier in the context of scientific metaphors for materiality. Some of the issues I took with the attempts in this earlier work to create a taxonomy of metaphor are relevant as criticisms of *Moral Imagination* as well. However, I want to begin by arguing for the relevance of some of the points Johnson raises to my own claims about metaphor and lyric ethics. Specifically, Johnson's distrust of the faulty binary between reason and ethics, his argument for links between the way we conceive of ethical dilemmas and the way we look at art, and his notion of "transperspectivity," or the openness to different and juxtaposed imagined approaches to ethical problems.

Just as metaphor was banished by philosophers after Aristotle from proper philosophical discourse to the decorative realm of rhetoric, ethics, as I discussed in terms of Wittgenstein above, is, if not wholly systematized by some theologians into a moral code, banished to the realm of the irrational, the miraculous, the superstitious. (In the case of Wittgenstein, however, these "superstitious" associations are not necessarily pejorative. Similarly, in the case of Levinas, the non-systematic character of ethical relations is inherently necessary.) Consistent with this attempt to include other ways of thinking within what we might think of as meaningful ethics, Johnson rails against what he perceives as the mistaken fear that to include imagination in reason would be to open reason to indeterminacy in our moral deliberations. Moreover, he asks how the Western tradition has come to view moral reasoning in a way that excludes imagination. Johnson opposes the rigid claims of moral absolutism that are "blind to the complex imaginative structure of human reason and even to the existence of valid alternative interpretations of a given situation" (119). In fact, he extends his critique of the binary between ethics and reason to the issue of the self and its predicament, suspended between competing forces of reason and desire, between its position as an a-historical, fixed moral agent and a being affected by historical contingencies (132-133). Johnson's view of the self underscores the point I have been making about the apprehension of materiality as metaphoricity. In this case, he advocates seeing the self as a temporal ecology, as an articulation between different social circumstances and different meaningful contexts, be they emotional or rational. The imagination, in light of Johnson's claims, I would argue, is an ecological dynamic that apprehends the materiality of things, including the self, as an articulated, metaphorical dynamic.

Johnson's view of the relationship between ethics and art is also important to the claims I make about lyric ethics because of the emphasis given to imaginative thinking, in which lyric is central, as a means of thinking ethically. In his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* Wittgenstein remarks famously that "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (71). This claim also subtends Charles Altieri's argument about the imagination as ethical literary criticism in his essay "Lyrical Ethics and Literary Criticism." Johnson points toward a conception of "morality as art," but backs away from completely connecting ethics to aesthetics. Moral situations are similar to situations where we encounter a piece of art; however, he is quick to point out that there is much in artistic activity that is not part of moral reasoning—he does not wish to make the metaphor "morality as art" a totalized and discrete equation (210). We employ discernment in both; we use expression in both; we are investigative and creative in both moral reasoning and artistic engagements. He goes on to suggest that Martin Luther King is like an artist in his ability to read the social circumstances of his day, to envision the means of achieving his ends, and to develop strategies to get there: "It required perception, imagination, and remarkable creativity to orchestrate the civil rights movement as he did. It is art to which we can all aspire" (213). By emphasizing that the "making, experiencing, and evaluating of artworks can serve as a model of moral judgement, insofar as it is pervasively imaginative in many of the same respects," Johnson's work underscores a conception of lyric and its operative dynamic of metaphoricity as a potentially active ethical agency (215).

Moral Imagination also contributes productively to my claims about lyric ethics through its development of a strategy for imaginatively looking, a kind of ecological "seeing as," that Johnson calls "transperspectivity." Recognizing the difficulty with attempting to assert and define an "objective" approach to issues of human morality, Johnson suggests that a necessarily limited and yet responsible version of objectivity might rest in a concept he borrows from the philosopher Steven Winter ("*Bull Durham* and the Uses of Theory"). Transperspectivity "is the ability of a physically, historically, socially, and culturally situated self to reflect critically on its own construction of a world, and to imagine other possible worlds that might be constructed" (241). It is this multifaceted approach to thinking moral problems that allows one to make leaps between contexts of reasoning. It is the capacity of the imagination, as a metaphorical dynamic, that makes it possible, for example, for animal rights activists and environmentalists to argue that human rights should be extended to the sphere of the nonhuman, to include animals and perhaps even plants. This, in large measure, is part of the reasoning employed by some Deep Ecologists.[3] Transperspectivity is another way of thinking of the articulations between the contexts of language-centred thinking that I have been discussing in the context of metaphor and metaphoricity. It is precisely this kind of dynamic that is enacted by lyric thinking; different perspectives and contexts of meaning interrupt and intervene among one another as a consequence of their resonant integration. It is this ecological relationship that I argue is ethical. However, it is important to note that Johnson's notion of transperspectivity relies heavily on the referential stability of language, on its capacities to fully convey meaning. In this way, as I elaborate below, his thinking departs from the claims I make for lyric ethics as an articulation between linguistic and non-linguistic thinking.

Despite the great value of a work that explicitly addresses the relationship between the forms and functions of metaphor and moral philosophy, *Moral Imagination* is in several significant ways inconsistent with how I propose to think of lyric ethics. Specifically, the systematic understanding of metaphor that Johnson proposes, and his faith in the imagination as a means of inhabiting other worlds and other minds are potentially problematic to a theory of ethics, such as the one I propose, that is based on the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. First, similar to Johnson's and Lakoff's earlier work (*Metaphors we live by* and *More Than Cool Reason*) metaphor is too readily understood as a system in *Moral Imagination*. Johnson explicitly declares that "Our most important moral concepts (e.g. will, action, purpose, rights, duties, laws) are defined by systems of metaphors" (33). Indeed, he goes on to point out that our understanding of moral situations is achieved "via conventional metaphorical mappings" (33). Johnson attempts to outline the taxonomy of fundamental metaphors that underlie our moral expressions; he reduces morality to three primary "clusters of metaphors": those concerned with the performances of actions, the character and quality of debt, and the evaluation of moral character (36). To reduce morality to its atomistic core of fundamental metaphors is to re-inscribe a reliance on the primacy of analytic reason that Johnson claims he wants to escape by introducing metaphor into moral questions. By asserting that "We have a way to figure out, in detail, what the metaphors are that define our basic moral concepts," Johnson is reducing metaphor to a totalized linguistic meaning; he presents a view of metaphor as something fully available in language (193). I claim, rather, that ethical relationships have the *form* of metaphor, that is they involve the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity, the "is" in relation to the "is not." Johnson's view does not deal with the question of how our relationships might take on the form of metaphor; rather, he is interested in demonstrating, for example, how an event as a motion along a path might allow one to make a moral decision given the fully linguistically knowable details offered by metaphorical thinking. I appreciate what Johnson is after—he wants us to be aware of the metaphors that lurk in our conceptual understandings of society—however, I think to suggest that we can in detail taxonomize these metaphors and know them is to re-inscribe the priority of logical, systematic thinking.

The second significant problem with *Moral Imagination* is a consequence of Johnson's faith in the capacity of language to fully express the meaning of metaphor, and it has to do with the manner in which this affects his argument for "transperspectivity." If by inhabiting other moral contexts through metaphorical mapping the meaning of these other contexts is discretely available to linguistic expression, then the differences between these contexts are potentially effaced. That is to say, does one not risk reducing the other to a known quantity through a transperspectivity that presupposes the ontological stability of the "is" in metaphor? Johnson's project is to analyze the metaphors that underlie our moral understanding with the idea that we will be able to arrive at a conclusion as to whether certain metaphors are common across different cultural contexts of moral reasoning. For him "This is an empirically testable claim, and our theory tells us how to go about testing it" (193). It underscores the notion that the meaning of metaphors can be fully expressed by language. Moreover, in the act of considering other contexts, through the imaginative leaps facilitated by transperspectivity, we risk making these other contexts fully expressible in language. Johnson argues that through our transperspective capacities we "go out toward people to inhabit their worlds, not just by rational calculations, but also in imagination, feeling, and expression" (200). As I mentioned before, this is a potential way of thinking the ecology of moral dilemmas, their articulatory dynamic. However, given the systematic understanding of metaphor and metaphorical taxonomies that Johnson claims, the risk is that there is no articulation across contexts of meaning involving non-linguistic, or extra-logical perspectives. The result is that what is different potentially ends up systematized within the confines of a discrete language-game, within the confines of what is the "same."

This is where Emmanuel Levinas comes in. Levinas's ethical philosophy explicitly addresses the tendency to subsume what is other under the reasoned categories of the same: "Western philosophy has most often been an ontology: a reduction of the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being" (*TI* 43). By emphasizing the analyzable, classifiable nature of metaphor, and consequently the analyzable and classifiable nature of the inhabited contexts made possible by transperspectivity, Johnson risks endorsing a reduction of otherness to sameness. It is the failure of this kind of taxonomic approach to metaphor to consider the articulated dynamic of "is" and "is not," to ignore the ontological ambivalence therein, that is at odds with my understanding of lyric ethics, where it is the dynamic of metaphoricity that is at stake rather than the stable meaning of any one metaphor.

I turn to Levinas now in order to argue that, despite his opposition to metaphor, and at times to poetry, Levinas's ethical philosophy is highly consistent with my theory of lyric ethics. Indeed, if Zwicky, McKay, and Graham exemplify this theory through poetry, I propose that Levinas's ethics is lyrical in a similarly exemplary way. Levinas is not a perfect fit for my theory; however, there is much in his thinking that illuminates the concept of lyric ethics, especially in terms of its relevance to relations with the nonhuman world.

4. Levinas: Ethics and Metaphor

The relation with the face is not an object-cognition.

(Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*)

The locus of Levinas's theory of ethics is the face to face encounter. Levinas, however, does not consider a face to be an object. Does this mean that a face is not matter? How does one read the expressions on a face, how does one kiss or caress a face if it is not material? The face, I argue, is a metaphor. It is, moreover, a metaphor in all of the complex relational dynamics that I have been attributing thus far to metaphor. Despite Levinas's protestations that the face not be understood as a metaphor, I want to claim in the following discussion that Levinas's ethics is lyrical inasmuch as it is founded upon the dynamic of metaphoricity—the self and the other are articulated together, involved in a relationship that is responsible by virtue of its openness to difference, and yet also by its imperative response to inextricable, ecological connections. The relationship that Levinas describes as ethical in the face to face encounter is the same dynamic that I have been describing in the context of lyric ethics.

As Simon Critchley reminds us in the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, "Ontology is Levinas's general term for any relation to otherness that is reducible to comprehension or understanding" (11). This notion of ontology underlies my critique of realist material thinking; to think of being or things as discrete, fully understandable entities, is to think of them in corpuscular physical terms, it is to think of things as atoms. Moreover, in terms of the structural emphasis I want to explore in Levinas's ethics, Critchley remarks that "It is the relation which is ethical, not an ethics instantiated in relations" (12). It is, similarly, the relational capacities in lyric metaphor that I see as operative in metaphoricity as opposed to the meaning of any single metaphor. By being in relation to infinity, by thinking the infinite, the "I" thinks more than it thinks. Critchley observes that "It is this formal structure of a thought that thinks more than it can think, that has a surplus within itself, that intrigues Levinas because it sketches the contours of a relation to something that is always in excess of whatever idea I may have of it, that always escapes me" (14). This is how I want to think of metaphoricity, of the relational dynamic within metaphor. For Levinas, what I would call atomistic materiality is a subject encumbered with itself. In the encounter with an other, however, this materiality is interrupted, the subject, as ontological entity, exists only as a composite, as a plurality articulated in relation to an extra-logical "mystery," to nonsense. We can think of the materiality of the subject in Levinas in the same terms that we can think the materiality of the object in quantum mechanics: hinged by the indeterminacy of its own composite plurality. If we are to make any advance into thinking environmental ethics, and if we are to avoid the temptation to ontologically fix the phenomenal world in language, we must begin, I contend, with the material metaphoricity of things. Levinas's philosophy offers us a way to conceive of such an ethics that is attentive to the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity.

The fact that the face is not a discrete object makes it an example of material metaphoricity. This "object" of the other is not attainable through systematic language, through literal reference; the face is a presence that is not a presence, a thing that is not a thing, an encounter that exceeds the language of description. In this way Levinas's treatment of the face is like metaphorical treatments of materiality that I discussed in the lyrical contexts of Zwicky, McKay, and Graham. In this section I examine first Levinas's resistance to metaphor and to the poetic image. Next, I consider his phenomenological investigation of the subject and its materiality; I want to argue how his description of the relational origin of the ethical subject (as "matter" that is opened to the other) is metaphorical in structure. In proceeding I focus specifically on Levinas's book *Time and the Other* and his notion of materiality, light, death, and eros in order to show how each, inasmuch as they are ecologically related to each other, express the fundamental articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. I also consider how metaphor is central to Levinas's ethical conception of the "feminine" and how despite his insistence that we not understand the "face" and other images as metaphors, it is the metaphoricity of his "figures" that makes an ethical approach to the feminine possible. His insistent correctives on this issue suggest, as John Llewelyn proposes, the important degree to which Levinas is required to think "metaphoricity" even in his repeated denials (Llewelyn *Genealogy* 179). In the final sections of this chapter I examine how McKay inflects Levinas's thinking of the face to face and of the relation between "things" and "elements" in order to consider lyric ethics in the context of anthropomorphic treatments of the nonhuman other. Martin Buber's I-You relation is important here also for thinking of the "facing of nature" as an ethical anthropomorphism founded on the idea of homage or gift to the other.

(i) The Problem of Metaphor: The Phenomenologist of the Non-phenomenon

To begin a discussion of Levinas, lyric, and metaphor it is important to note the difficult position that metaphor occupies in his work. As if to embody the very articulatory tensions of metaphor, Levinas both is and is not metaphorical. By this I mean he frequently employs metaphors and occasionally speaks highly of figurative enterprises, but he also explicitly denounces metaphors, or at least what he perceives to be "metaphorical readings" of his philosophical terminology. Levinas's ambivalence regarding metaphor also applies more generally to poetry. While he celebrates the poetry of Paul Celan, and his writing "*for the other*," (*Proper Names* 41) as well as the poetic works of Maurice Blanchot among others, Levinas is also highly critical of the poetic image, especially in his essay "Reality and its Shadow."

While Levinas speaks favourably of metaphor in his essay "Meaning and Sense," praising it as "excellence of perception," (n173) he is elsewhere suspicious of metaphor. We are entreated, for example, in Levinas's book *En Découvrant L'Existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* to note that "*dans son visage, Autrui – sans aucune métaphore – me fait face*" [The other faces me without any metaphor] (186). In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas asserts that the presentation of the other, which he refers to as the face, "does not consist in figuring as a theme under my gaze, in spreading itself forth as a set of qualities forming an image. The face of the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me" (50-51). In other words the face, the very site of ethical engagement, is not a metaphor. Part of his reasoning for this assertion rests on his conviction that the metaphysical relation, the transcendental encounter with the face of the other is not a representation. In order for the face to be represented as such it would have to be subsumed into the logic of the same. The other is other and cannot be disclosed in, as Levinas says, a "borrowed light" (67). It is interesting to note here that as a disciple of phenomenology, Levinas's work with the face is an attempt to write the phenomenology of what is effectively a non-phenomenon.

Levinas's opposition to poetic language is based principally around his suspicions that figurative language bemuses and lulls the reader into a false face to face encounter. In "Reality and Its Shadow" he describes the poetic image as a musicality, as a rhythm that leads us to treat false objects as reality. The image is trapped in a world of inaction; it is, consequently, a shadow of reality. Levinas's argument here is essentially a reiteration of difficulties that Plato had with the image: as beholders we are fooled into taking the image as reality; what we engage with, however, is an object frozen outside of time and outside of responsibility. The image is a totalized rendering of the real, a fixity that cannot bear the trace of the other.

Levinas's problems with figurative language are also evident in his religious writings. In his book *Difficult Freedom* he discusses the Christian dependence on and obsession with figures and metaphors. In contrast, he sees Judaism as a religion that distrusts overly metaphorical presentation and instead remains (curiously enough, metaphorically) "all ears and obedience" (50). He considers the possibility that the wood of Noah's ark prefigures the cross, or that the burning bush prefigures the crown of thorns, to be exegetical exercises that remove the lifelike quality of the Bible and fix it instead in a frozen procession of images. Levinas jokes in his essay "Persons or Figures" that to read the text with this kind of metaphorical play is to see it as "an immense psychoanalysis practiced by the repressed author of the Bible" (120).

Jill Robbins speculates in an essay titled "Facing Figures" that it is as if figures themselves were unethical for Levinas (290). She notes that part of Levinas's rejection of figure has to do with his rejection of rhetoric, of which he sees metaphor as an operative component. This is a very old argument, one that goes back to Aristotle. Aristotle understood metaphor to be rhetorical; however, as Paul Ricoeur spends considerable time discussing in *The Rule of Metaphor*, rhetoric was a philosophical activity for Aristotle. It was later thinkers who divorced rhetoric from philosophy and consequently relegated metaphor to the sphere of discursive ornamentation. However, as Jill Robbins begins to point out in her essay and develops further in her book *Altered Reading*, Levinas has a certain reliance on metaphor in setting out his ethical philosophy. His frequent recourse to binary oppositions (stage-world, person-figure) to make his points is "continuous with and proper to the very concept of mimesis that he is purportedly criticizing" (*Altered* 53). Moreover, Robbins proposes that "it might be necessary not to turn *away* from figure, as Levinas does, but to face the figure otherwise, as language's ownmost figurative potential, as that which is most distinctive to language, that is, to face language *as* ethical possibility" (54). Indeed, she goes on to point out that ethics is something that happens in language for Levinas, which is "what makes even the face, in the last analysis, a facing figure" (54).

Here I part company with Robbins to some degree.[4] Metaphor is not wholly approachable through language, nor does it completely reside there. While it is true that ethics is a "conversation" for Levinas, and that it very clearly involves linguistic address, it is important to point out that his ethics also involves an imperative beyond logic, and a face whose very representation is not possible in the language of reference. My point is that ethics involves both language and non-language; that is, it involves the systems of language to some degree, but it also involves an ethical speaking that is not reducible to systematic expression. In this way, ethics enacts the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity that I have been describing. The very expressive materiality of ethics, we might say, is metaphoricity.

This is a good point at which to examine more closely Levinas's ethical philosophy in order to consider not only how figures function, but also how metaphoricity is operative in his very reckonings with the materiality of beings and the materiality of ethics. *Time and the Other* is important for my purposes because it is a reasonably condensed expression of Levinas's thought that, while written early in his career, was still prized by Levinas later in his life for its succinct faithfulness to his enterprise. Time moves in and out of my discussion about materiality here; nonetheless, I would like to leave temporal issues principally to the next chapter. In proceeding below I focus specifically on Levinas's notion of materiality, light, death, and eros in order to show how each, inasmuch as they are ecologically related to each other, expresses the fundamental articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity.

(ii) "I" Matter

In his book *Time and the Other* Levinas begins by describing the origin of the existent, of the identity as "I," that establishes the subject and its material existence

(1). Levinas moves on from this to portray the subject's solitude as a kind of atomistic existence (in other words, isolated, discrete) that he eventually describes as interrupted by the other who opens the subject, its materiality, its solitude into social relation. This is important because it directly establishes what I consider to be a metaphorical dynamic at the centre of the question of matter in Levinas's thinking. By moving from the "il y a," from anonymous existence, all the way through suffering, mortality, and the social futurity of fecundity, to the "mystery" of the other, Levinas tracks an emerging ethical relationship with and within materiality that is consistent with what I have been describing as material metaphoricity.

The text of *Time and the Other* is from earlier in Levinas's career—it comes from a series of lectures he gave in Paris at the Philosophical College in 1946-47. However, as he himself acknowledges (having sanctioned the translation and reprint of the book later in his career), it stands on its own very well as an examination of several key elements of his philosophy. The book is marked by the subject's progression from totality, from the closed logic of the "same," towards infinity, or towards the alterity of the other. Levinas states at the very beginning of the book that "The aim of these lectures is to show that time is not the achievement of an isolated and lone subject, but that it is the very relationship of the subject with the Other" (39). That is to say that the relationship with the other is dependant at once upon a relationship to the future and the immemorial past. Ultimately, I want to argue that this conception of time (as something that affects the opening of the individual to the other), of inter-subjective relations, is at once an example of metaphoricity and of an ecological dynamic – it is a relation where constituents stand in relation without being fused, where they are in part constituted by the interruption of each other's solitary existences, by the alterity that each brings to the relation. However, as a preliminary step I consider the atomistic rendering of the existent in existing, or in other words the discrete materiality of the individual.

In *Time and the Other* Levinas immediately attempts to distinguish the existent from the category of existing. He suggests that such a division for Martin Heidegger, against whom Levinas establishes much of his critique, would be meaningless; one exists by virtue of being an existent. However, what Levinas aims to show is that the category of existing is itself anonymous—a backdrop that has no starting point in time. In one of his frequent appeals to the imagination, Levinas proposes a situation where all things, beings, and persons return to nothingness. What would remain, he asks? He suggests that "the fact of existing imposes itself when there is no longer anything" (47). He calls this remnant imposition the *il y a*: "What remains after this imaginary destruction of everything is not something, but the fact that there is [*il y a*]" (46). Thus, immediately in his book Levinas has recourse, through this imaginary destruction, to the employment of lyrical devices in order to explain his point. That is, to make his point, to give it form and make it "matter," as it were, he utilizes the metaphorical situation of a return to nothingness in order to complicate the notion of existence. Moreover, despite his flippant suggestion that "the fact of having recourse to what does not exist, in order to understand what does exist, hardly constitutes a revolution in philosophy," (46) he has highlighted fundamental issues of material metaphoricity: the difficulty with which metaphysics understands itself as metaphor.

What is significant about Levinas's exploration of anonymous existing is that for him this becomes the site of a "hypostatization" of the ontological origin of the subject, of the self in itself, of the existent in existing. This is the origin of the solitary being; it is also an atomistic rendering of the subject and its relations. Levinas notes early on that "Perception and science always start with the existents already supplied with their private existence. Is this tie between what exists and its existing indissoluble? Can one go back to hypostasis?" (44). It is hypostatization that renders the subject in atomistic existence, it occurs in the present, in instants cut off from each other. The subject is made present in existence like the atomic corpuscle of early materialist philosophy in that it is a discrete totality, a veritable automaton, if you will, because for Levinas this totalized, un-relational subject is not exposed to the other and is, therefore, not fully, socially human.[5] The moment of this hypostatization is static, frozen in time; it comes from itself and, consequently, has received nothing from the past. Solitude is the result of hypostatization, it is, as Levinas points out, "the indissoluble unity between the existent and its existing" (54). The existent is alone because it has mastered existing and has closed itself into the logic of the same, into a return to the self. The fact that the existent cannot detach itself from itself establishes its material foundation, which, as a solitary being, is, I suggest, a closed, discrete foundation: "This manner of being occupied with itself is the subject's materiality" (55). Or, as Levinas says more succinctly: "I am encumbered by myself. And this is material existence" (56). Solitude is the closed materiality of the subject "because it is shut up within the captivity of its identity, because it is matter" (57).

It is the interruption of this solitude, or this sealed identity of frozen time, that the other represents for Levinas as an intervention into the foundational event of hypostatization: "To shatter the enchainment of matter is to shatter the finality of hypostasis. It is to be in time" (57). The link that Levinas makes between matter and the subject here is central to my arguments for why it is possible to think of ethics in relation to the phenomenal, nonhuman world, and for why it is possible to think of his model of inter-subjective relations in the terms of metaphoricity and in the context of material metaphoricity. Materiality, for Levinas, is founded in the hypostatic closure of identity within itself. I want to argue that the opening of the ego to the other, to its different times, to its otherness, is an example of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. It is moreover, an example of materiality—in this case, the self opened to the other—that is similarly hinged between "is" and "is not," between presence and absence. In its approach to the question of materiality Levinasian ethics is not unlike the articulatory dynamic of quantum physics, which I discussed earlier, in the context of the sealed, elemental atom itself opened and reconsidered as the site of indeterminate, interrelated processes. Metaphoricity is enacted as the resonant relationship between self and other, within the material of the subject, which is not unlike the interrelated oscillations at work within the quantum view of matter itself.

Levinas proceeds from his discussion of the correspondence between solitude and matter to take up the subject's rudimentary relationship with the world in Part II of *Time and the Other*. If we connect, he reminds us, "solitude to the subject's materiality – materiality being its enchainment to itself – we can understand in what sense the world and our existence in the world constitute a fundamental advance of the subject in overcoming the weight that it is to itself, in overcoming it's materiality – that is to say, in loosening the bond between the self and the ego" [*sic*] (62). As a consideration of what potentially takes the subject outside of itself he examines notions of nourishment and enjoyment (a topic he expands upon in greater detail in *Totality and Infinity* and then again in *Otherwise than Being*). This first attempted movement out of matter (notwithstanding the false step that Levinas claims it to be) offers lyricism in the face of interrupted materiality. More specifically lyrical, however, is how Levinas considers the involvement of light in what takes the subject outside of itself.

(iii) Lyric Light

It is the beginning of winter as I write this. When I go for a walk there is the smell of wood smoke, of Christmas trees piled in rows outside the grocery store. We enjoy fresh air and luxurious scents not simply for health, but for the enjoyment of the activity itself. Levinas proposes that "[t]his relationship with an object can be characterized by enjoyment [*jouissance*]," as engagement with the object itself as an end (63). He goes on to suggest that "Knowledge and luminosity essentially belong to enjoying" (63). Light illuminates the object in our encounter; it makes it visible to reason. However, in the act of enjoying something, in being nourished by objects, we are not approaching the object as other, but placing it within an economy of the same, within a visible spectrum that originates from the subject: "Light is that through which something is other than myself, but already as if it came from me. The illuminated object is something one encounters, but from the very fact that it is illuminated one encounters it as if it came from us" (64). Light is what allows us to "know" and "enjoy" matter, but only insomuch as it illuminates ourselves, our instrumental designs.

This, it seems to me, is an overly reductive way of explaining our relationship to things through the act of enjoyment.[6] However, Levinas's discussion about light is useful for my purposes because it illuminates a paradoxical dynamic in his work: his rejection of lyrical tactics emerges from his very employment of those tactics. Light, as an emanation from things, as a kind of image, is certainly suggestive of Neoplatonic philosophy, which, as Daniel Tiffany explains in *Toy Medium*, involves lyrical leaps, lyrical participation in corporeal form (210). Tiffany explores at length the relationship between theories of light and modern formulations of corporeality. Light is central to quantum mechanical dilemmas of behaviour and probability. Indeed, theories of the physical properties of light develop historically in ways not unlike atomistic materialist theories. As part of his corpuscular theory of light Newton envisioned microscopes powerful enough to one day distinguish the corpuscular properties of different coloured light (Tiffany 208). This particle theory was contrasted in Newton's time by Christiaan Huygens of Holland and his belief in a wave model of light, which gained considerable influence after the British scientist Thomas Young's slit refraction experiments in the early 19th century (Morris 7). Quantum mechanics, however, has not solved the problem—that is to say it has not come down on the side of wave or particle. Rather, it holds that light behaves like both waves and particles, further complicating the issue. Light, like matter, has been opened to a plurality of identities, to a relational being, to metaphoricity.

Levinas's use of light in the context considered above is, like his depiction of the solitary subject at the beginning of *Time and the Other*, an atomistic model of closed totalities. Light is inextricably involved with the logic of the same. What I wish to suggest here, however, is that light is characterized differently by Levinas in different contexts. In light (if I may) of some of his comments in *Totality and Infinity*, light is suggestive of a lyrical leap between physics and metaphysics, between subjects, things and ethics, between language-games, we might say in the context of Zwicky's *Wisdom and Metaphor*. In *Totality and Infinity*, for example, light is not wholly suspicious; indeed, it also belongs to the other: "The other is not an object that must be interpreted and illumined by my alien light. He shines forth with his own light, and speaks for himself" (14). That the other shines with light and that this light is ultimately an element of the other's "mystery," is consistent with how I suggest lyric is operative in his ethics despite his explicit resistance.

Levinas is more helpful in *Totality and Infinity* in explaining how precisely light operates as part of the logic of totality. Our experience of the other is not like the visibility of objects; "a being is not placed in the light of another.…*The absolute experience is not disclosure but revelation:* a coinciding of the expressed with him who expresses.…The face is a living presence; it is expression" (65-66). Levinas distinguishes here between light and visibility, or perception; it is not simply luminosity that is in question, but the response to light, the visibility (visible-ability, or perception) that looks into the light and grasps objects in the totality of a glance. Light itself is resident in, constitutive of, subjects by virtue of their exteriority to other subjects; it is that element of their materiality that is perceptible in encounters. Given that visibility is so easily blinded by the light of the other, so easily given over to the impulse to capture through enjoyment and the logic of the same, then light, I would argue, is as vulnerable as the face; it inhabits the same lyrical, non-phenomenal space in his ethics (the articulatory space of the "is" and "is not").

For Levinas, "Ethics is an optics. But it is a 'vision' without image, bereft of the synoptic and totalizing objectifying virtues of vision, a relation or an intentionality of a wholly different type—which this work [*Totality and Infinity*] seeks to describe" (23). If ethics is an optics, and if we can understand optics as an example of metaphoricity, of dualities and indeterminacies co-existing in inter-relational spaces, then it is possible to appreciate the centrality of lyrical thinking to Levinas's project. Levinas proposes a way of thinking of things that does not rely on system. He suggests that this "other-regarding way of thought rejects the traditional assumption that reason has no plural, and asks why we should not recognize what our lived experience shows us, that reason has many centres, and approaches the truth in many different ways" (*TO* 16). Levinas is, by implication, asking for an ecological approach to the other.

(iv) Lyric Death

The absolutely unknowable, for Levinas, is that which is foreign to all light (71). Death is that which is absolutely unknowable and, consequently, foreign to any illumination. In Martin Heidegger's analyses (*Being and Time*) it is in being toward death where we encounter our own authenticity and virility, where we grasp the possibility of our own being; Levinas argues, however, death is precisely that which removes the possibility of our own activity and freedom. He suggests, in short, that in death we are unable to be able. Death is our relation with something absolutely other; however, it is not a relation that we can subsume through enjoyment, but it is something whose material existence is alterity (he uses the word "alterity" here as a substitute for "exteriority," which suggests a topological, spatial relation which is insufficient for Levinas's means). The other is foreign to light inasmuch as light, as a condition of visibility, of perception, is the circumscription of our own reason. The other exists beyond the limits of our own reason, beyond a singular reason as such. The other, therefore, is always a kind of material metaphoricity for me because his or her existence, as otherness, is an unknowable material existing in its own light, in the extra-logical realm where my reason is exceeded, where my own mastery of solitude is exceeded: "My solitude is thus not confirmed by death but broken by it" (74).

It is important to point out here that in not being able to be able in death, it is not that my powers are insufficient—as Levinas points out, we encounter realities that exceed our strength all the time in the world—rather, it is that I can have no *a priori* resources from which to draw upon. The subject in this instance loses its own mastery as a subject. Our conception of events, of the material evidence of proof, is interrupted in encountering this inassimilable experience. Where hypostatization is the event of fusion between existing and existent, in our encounter with death we are faced with the separation of existing and existent. That is to say, "In death the existing of the existent is alienated" (75). Our material existence, the way in which we are encumbered by ourselves, is interrupted.

This interruption of the solitary existent is an example of what I have been calling metaphoricity. Death reveals to me my articulated relationship with existing; it underscores the fact that as an existent I am not fused to existing, that existence must itself be plural. Moreover, the other, whose time is in part this absolute futurity, "does not possess this existing as the subject possesses it; its hold over my existing is mysterious. It is not unknown but unknowable, refractory to all light" (75). Levinas points out further that "we recognize the other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the other is a relationship with a Mystery" (75). This issue of resemblance is raised again by Levinas in a footnote where he suggests that it is alterity rather than "shared attributes" that is the "key to social life" (75).

Levinas's resistance here to resemblance is one that can be understood as an assertion that the relationship with alterity is one in which both poles of the relationship (self and other) are discrete entities (or discrete contexts in the way that Jan Zwicky describes the articulations between language-games) inter-subjectively articulated. I resemble the other, but it is the other's alterity that I confront in any ethical relationship, rather than similarities to myself. In metaphoricity, in the articulatory lyrical relation, resemblance is engaged not in order to complete the closed translation of things, to render the terms of one in the sealed, selfsame economy of the other; rather, as Paul Ricoeur discusses in *The Rule of Metaphor*, "metaphor displays the work of resemblance because the literal contradiction preserves the difference within the metaphorical statement; 'same' and 'different' are not just mixed together, they also remain opposed. Through this specific trait, enigma lives on in the heart of metaphor" (196). Mystery lives on in the encounter with the other.

(v) Eros and Ethics

The last part of *Time and the* Other is taken up with Levinas's discussion of eros. He proposes that we think of the relation with the other in erotic terms. What is important for my purposes about Levinas's turn to eros at this point is that it becomes an attempt to explain the metaphoricity of his metaphors. Eros, fecundity, and relations between the sexes are cast as sympathetic, interrelated dynamics that are involved in the face to face encounter. As Derrida reminds us in "White Mythology," in order to explain the metaphoricity of metaphor one is required to make use of metaphor; it is impossible to get outside metaphor without acknowledging the supplement and corresponding deficit that "the metaphor of metaphor" would require: "This extra metaphor, remaining outside the field that it allows to be circumscribed, extracts itself from this field, thus subtracting itself as a metaphor less" (220). In other words, as I have been emphasizing, to explain a philosophical metaphor, to make it present in systematic language, is to fail to attend to its metaphoricity, it is to propose an exteriority to the concept of metaphor. Levinas insists the face is not a metaphor even as he employs it metaphorically. However, he cannot, as Derrida suggests above, get outside of metaphor despite his protestations. Moreover, as I explain below, Levinas's work enacts metaphoricity by way of attending to the resonant connections among different metaphors of love, attraction, and touch.

Levinas writes that "the relationship with the other will never be the feat of grasping a possibility….Eros, strong as death, will furnish us with the basis of an analysis of this relationship with mystery" (*TO* 76). In his attempt to find a situation where the alterity of the other presents itself in a positive sense, as a material essence, as an original form, Levinas settles on the erotic, sexual relation. Paul Moyaert observes of the erotic relation in Levinas that "To be in love is to no longer be oneself. The other person has suddenly completely taken over the place of one's own ego" (31). As a means to examine erotic attraction Levinas discusses the categories of sexual difference. He argues that "Sex is not some specific difference. It is situated beside the logical division into genera and species. This division certainly never manages to reunite an empirical content" (*TO* 85). The notion that sex is beside logical divisions is suggestive of Agamben's conception of the "example" and the "space of ease," which I discussed in the first two chapters. In *The Coming Community* Agamben identifies the "example" as that which serves neither the particular nor the general. Metaphoricity, as a relationship between terms that does not nullify difference, behaves in the same way; a metaphor is never a discrete exemplar, it releases and undoes the concept of identity even as it posits identity. Sex in this case, like the face, is always beside itself, beside its own category in the systems of language. As I mentioned earlier, this is the condition of ethical, "Whatever" being that Agamben describes as taking place beside the example.

I emphasize the dynamic of metaphoricity present in Levinas's conception of sexual difference in order to argue for the centrality of lyric to his conception of ethics, but also to underscore the complexity of his use of sexually charged metaphors. The difference between the sexes is characterized by him as being the "duality of two complementary terms" that have a "relationship with what always slips away" (86). He goes on to suggest that "The other as other is not here an object that becomes ours or becomes us; to the contrary, it withdraws into its mystery" (86). One way to think of this is to see the relation between the sexes (although in an admittedly limited and heterosexual way) as an example of metaphoricity inasmuch as it is a hinged relationship where the objectification of the other, its atomistic materiality, is interrupted and instead approached lyrically as "mystery."

Despite the obviously fanciful implications of "mystery," Levinas further qualifies what he means by equating the term mystery with the "feminine"; however, in this equation he aims to avoid "any romantic notions of the mysterious, unknown, or misunderstood woman" (86). It is this part of Levinas's thinking that has quite rightly drawn criticism from feminist philosophers. Simone de Beauvoir, for example, takes Levinas to task in *The Second Sex* for assigning to women the secondary status of "other" to the masculine subject. Indeed, I cannot defend Levinas when he refers to women as "the weaker sex," among other potentially sexist references (86). However, I would suggest that the dynamics inherent within the metaphors themselves, that is to say the metaphoricity of Levinas's discussion, with its emphasis on articulated relationships, offer valuable inflections of his thinking. Indeed, he acknowledges the limitations of the nominal categories of his discourse by admitting that "Even when by positing the Other as freedom, by thinking of the Other in terms of light, I am obliged to admit the failure of communication....It is only by showing in what way eros differs from possession and power that I can acknowledge a communication in eros. It is neither a struggle, nor a fusion" (88). Thus, the mystery that is the other, that is the feminine, is implicated in this failure of communication, which extends to the terms themselves; Levinas remarks at one point: "I see no other possibility than to call it mystery" (88).

Other feminist philosophers have expressed concern not only with Levinas's conception of the feminine other, but also with the role of metaphor more generally in hermeneutics. Morny Joy observes in her essay "Metaphor and Metamorphosis" that metaphor "is viewed as simply one tool among many of patriarchal privilege, with either the Derridean critique of it as...signifying presence or the Lacanian view as denoting lexical substitution prevailing" (192). Joy's essay, however, which focuses on Luce Irigaray, attempts a recuperation of metaphor in the context of sexual difference and representation. At first glance, according to Joy, Irigaray appears to reject metaphor and hermeneutics; however, on closer examination "hermeneutics – especially the role of metaphor – when revised with a sensitivity to gender, could be of help to Irigaray in formulating an ethically viable exchange between men and women" (193). Joy argues that the polyvalent is/is not tensions within metaphor allow "Irigaray to utilize the full array of seemingly paradoxical ascriptions that her words may elicit, without their limitation to a single register" (209). The manner in which Joy is proposing metaphor be understood in relation to ethics is an example of what I am calling metaphoricity. The resonant articulations operant within the metaphor are the structural, relational possibilities of ethical interaction. If we understand metaphor "as the agency of difference which can hold in tension seemingly paradoxical positions," then, Joy observes, it becomes possible to see how "Women are no longer the irregular, the inferior of a divided species" (212). What is emphasized here is the importance of attending to the metaphoricity of metaphor as opposed to its definitive closure into a single meaning. Inevitably metaphors that are sealed into one particular meaning, one particular language-game, fail to be responsible to articulations between language-games. The "feminine" as other, the "face" as other, even the Lacanian phallus, are all metaphors that exceed the contexts and circumstances of their own figures as such. The face is not simply a face, nor can it be discretely understood, as I discuss momentarily, as simply a human face. It is to the relational possibilities of the metaphoricity of the face, of the feminine, of the phallus that we must direct our attention.

Through his investigation of eros, sexual difference, and the feminine Levinas offers different metaphorical approaches to the question of the relationship with the other. In the concluding pages of *Time and the Other* he remarks quite succinctly on what the relationship with other must be through its various manifestations: "I have precisely wanted to contest the idea that the relationship with the other is fusion. The relationship with the Other is the absence of the other; not absence pure and simply, not the absence of pure nothingness, but the absence in a horizon of the future, an absence that is time" (90). This relationship that is an absence/non-absence is the ontological ambivalence that characterizes the metaphorical relation. That the relation with the other is not one of fusion underscores the fact that it is not one of atomistic materialism; the other is phenomenal only inasmuch as it is approached as material metaphoricity, that is, only inasmuch as metaphoricity is constitutive of its substantiality, its materiality.

5. The feminine

The issue of the feminine as metaphor raises a central question about lyric and materiality. To what degree does approaching the feminine as metaphor undermine the existence of real bodies? To think of the feminine as metaphorical even when considering it as metaphoricity, as relating to the formal structure of sexual difference as opposed to the essential category of women, continues to raise problems for some feminist philosophers. In making a metaphor of the "feminine," Levinas very clearly rejects the notion that the term refers to any empirical sense of women. Stella Sandford observes in her essay "Levinas, feminism and the feminine" that

> If Levinas's earlier discussions of the feminine are to do the *feminist* work his readers want them to do, the relation between the philosophical category and its associated empirical content (its reference, in some sense, to women) must be affirmed. For Levinas, however, in order for the category to do the *philosophical* work he wants it to do, the relation between the philosophical category and its ostensible empirical content must, on the contrary, be denied so that the structure of sexual difference can play its purely formal role. (149)

Sandford argues that the way in which the feminine is thought in Levinas's philosophy ultimately offers no resources for feminism because his recourse to abstraction does not allow for real bodies in a productively political manner. Here then is the ethical crux of the relationship between lyric and matter. How is the lyrical substantial? What does it mean for real bodies to be rendered lyrically? Sandford does admit that it is impossible to definitively separate out the metaphorical idea from the empirical referent, which, as she points out, "problematizes the terms involved on both sides, as it were, of the metaphor" (157). She suggests intriguingly that "The idea of empirical 'women', we may then conclude, is no more purely empirical than the idea of 'the feminine' is purely metaphorical, and there is no purely empirical ground to which one can then refer the metaphor of 'women' (even the idea of 'sex difference' would have its metaphorical element)" (157). The consequence of this blending of the metaphorical and the empirical is that categories of gender and sexual difference become more complicated than their binary divisions would suggest. Sandford concedes that this "would be very far from anything that Levinas intended when he began his meditations on the feminine and sexual difference. Nevertheless, it is one of its implications" (158).

In *Time and the Other* Levinas emphasizes the abstract, structural importance of the feminine; in *Totality and Infinity* and other works, however, sexual difference, as explored through the "caress," requires that bodies encounter each other as material entities. If this is the case, however, the erotic encounter is, as Sandford rightly points out, a heterosexual encounter where the feminine is still "other" within a heterosexual economy. I do not wish to defend Levinas's handling of sexual difference; indeed I think it is highly problematic for many of the reasons previously outlined. However, the difficulties that his thinking presents are useful at this point in my discussion for considering how, as Sandford intimates above, the metaphorical and the empirical are interconnected, how, as a lyrical element in his thinking, metaphor—metaphoricity—becomes the potential for ethics in relationships between things, human and nonhuman, substantial and non-substantial.

In his book *The Genealogy of Ethics*, John Llewelyn addresses this question of ontology and metaphor in relation to Heidegger and Levinas. It is Llewelyn who introduces the term "metaphoricity" as a possible conception for the abstract structural relationship that underlies the face to face (however, he does not develop the term in the way that I have): "This 'for the Other' could at some risk be said to be metaphoricity itself, or quasi-metaphoricity" (178). He goes on to point out the lengths to which Heidegger and particularly Levinas go to avoid having their terms and concepts understood as "metaphors." For Heidegger metaphor operates in the realm of the metaphysical, where for Levinas metaphor makes figures or images of relationships that he contends are literal. However, Llewelyn argues, both employ metaphors to underscore relations of metaphoricity that are central to the concealing/un-concealing and phenomenal/non-phenomenal dynamics at work in their thinking: "Heidegger draws attention to the ontological non-metaphoricity. While applauding and retaining that insight, Levinas thinks that there is an ethical non-metaphoricity underlying the ontological non-metaphoricity. But how can he think this? Is there not a problem here?" (178).

One of Llewelyn's central theses is the close and often overlooked link (raised for him by Hegel) between "as" and "is" in philosophical discourse; to think metaphorically is also to think being. While he acknowledges that it is possible to speak non-metaphorically, he wonders whether this can be done in the philosophy in question. In light of the idea that metaphor is thinking being, Llewelyn asks whether "when Levinas, instead of affirming metaphoricity, again and again denies it, is not he embarrassed by the same predicament? Since he has to think metaphoricity if he has to deny it, he has to think being" (179). The necessity to think being in order to get outside of ontology is of course part of the critique offered by Derrida in his essay on Levinas, "Violence and Metaphysics." As Simon Critchley observes, Levinas acknowledged that he undertook *Otherwise than Being* at least in part in order to address Derrida's critique. Nonetheless, what is important here is the degree to which Levinas is engaged with metaphoricity in the midst of his professed literality. I have been trying to demonstrate the importance of lyric metaphor as metaphoricity to the operative dynamics of his conception of ethical relationships. In terms of the question of whether thinking metaphor necessarily means thinking being, it is important to consider the ontological ambivalence that Ricoeur reminds us is part of metaphor—the "as" and the "is" are also negated, or at least contingent, in the midst of their relationship. In an analysis of Paul Ricoeur, Jerry Gill points out that "whenever we affirm a similarity between two or more aspects of our world, we by the same act simultaneously affirm various dissimilarities as well....Thus the use of 'is' always cuts in two directions at once, especially in metaphorical speech" (Gill 33).

If thinking metaphor is thinking being then it is also thinking non-being. I would similarly suggest that thinking metaphor is also thinking non-metaphor. To paraphrase McKay: metaphor uses language's totalizing capacity against itself. Being is hinged to non-being and literality is hinged to figure in the metaphorical relationship. Zwicky also reminds us that metaphor depends on non-metaphor; that is, there is an ontological ambivalence at the heart of metaphor. Metaphoricity, as such, requires that we hold in resonant relationship both of these possibilities. Thus, matter, like the subject facing the other, is an oscillatory composite, which is in keeping with quantum mechanical notions of materiality. Lyric, therefore, as metaphoricity, interrupts the boundaries between the ethical and the ontological, between, as I explore below, the "saying" and the "said."

6. Saying the Right Thing

I want to examine the focus on language that Levinas takes in his later book *Otherwise than Being* (1974) in order to consider how the "saying" that inhabits the "said" is one way of approaching this hinged relationship between lyric and matter. Ethics, Levinas reminds us, is not perception but expression; it is, as he points out in *Totality and Infinity*, conversation: "The relation between the same and the other…is primordially enacted as conversation" (39). It is in *Otherwise than Being* that the face to face relation is discussed in more detail as a linguistic relation instead of a perceptual or visual relation. The saying is my exposure to the other: "it is a verbal and possibly also non-verbal ethical performance, of which the essence cannot be captured in constative propositions" (Critchley 18). The said on the other hand is involved in the logic of truth and falsity; it exists in the realm of ontology where the saying inhabits the realm of ethics. As Levinas points out in *Otherwise than Being* the said is that "in which everything is thematized, in which everything shows itself in a theme" (183). Simon Critchley proposes that a distinction between the two might be made by considering that "the content of my words, their identifiable meaning, is the said, while the saying consists in the fact that these words are being addressed to an interlocutor" (18). In terms of the present discussion of metaphoricity we might say that the saying is relational where the said is atomistic. The saying is the fact of one's relationship with the other, "it is the proximity of one to the other, the commitment of an approach" (*OB* 5). Whereas the said, on the other hand, is the discrete object, it is language attached to the world, to intentionality.

Philosophy, however, speaks the language of the said, of ontology, as Critchley points out; philosophy is filled with propositions: "the methodological problem facing the later Levinas, and which haunts every page of the rather baroque prose of *Otherwise than Being*, is the following: how is the saying to be said?" (18). Critchley suggests that the solution to this methodological problem is to be found in Levinas's notion of "reduction." The said must be reduced to its inherent saying through the interruption of the boundaries between the ethical and the ontological: "In brief, it is a question of exploring the ways in which the said can be unsaid, or reduced, thereby letting the saying circulate as a residue or interruption within the said" (18). This idea is important because it proposes the unavoidability of the said. Levinas states this quite clearly in *Otherwise than Being* when he remarks that "the saying is both an affirmation and a retraction of the said" (44). The saying depends on the said the way metaphor depends on the literal. Moreover, the articulation here between affirmation and retraction is akin to that at work in metaphor. Similarly, as I discussed in the case of Zwicky's theory of metaphor, the metaphorical depends on the literal, it depends on the distinctness of things in their language-games. The unavoidability of the said is important in another way: it underscores the necessity, as gender and material studies remind us, to think about real bodies and real things. In approaching the real, as I argued in the case of the realist impulse in literary ecocriticism, it is metaphoricity that is dually accountable to the distinctness of things (the said) and their articulatory relationship to other contexts of meaning (the saying) that are not reducible to systematic logic.

More specifically, however, in relation to the current discussion I would suggest that the fact that "ethical saying is nothing that can be said propositionally and that ethics cannot be put into words….[and that] Strictly speaking, ethical discourse is nonsense, but it is serious nonsense," is very much consistent with the function of metaphor, both in its relational dynamic and in its purported intentionality (Critchley 19). As Max Black, Nelson Goodman and others remind us, metaphor is a category mistake; it is "an affair between a predicate with a past and an object that yields while protesting" (Goodman 124). Metaphor is serious nonsense. It is that which employs the language of the said and yet, through the ontological ambivalence of is/is not (and here Critchley is speaking of the saying) it "deconstructs the limits of ontology and its claim to conceptual mastery, while also recognizing the unavoidability of the Said" (18). I would argue that Levinas appears to recognize this briefly in an essay entitled "Hermeneutics and the Beyond" when he mentions that "the elevation of meaning by metaphor in the *said* owes its height to the *transcendence* of the *saying* to the other person" (71).

If the saying inhabits the said, and if the saying is the relational, ethical dynamic that works to interrupt the corpuscular ontology of the said, then it is possible to argue for the ethics of lyric, for metaphoricity, with its emphasis on relational resonance, in encounters with the other. It is, moreover, possible to argue for the importance of lyrical dynamics to Levinas's conception of ethical exchange. Nonetheless, the fact that the other here is always a person for Levinas poses a difficulty. Until now it has been possible to understand Levinas's discussions of subjectivity as abstractly relevant to material phenomena; indeed, he has courted this kind of thinking by proposing that materiality is the very predicament of a subject encumbered with itself. However, by emphasizing the importance of language, of conversation in the ethical encounter, Levinas has all but ruled out the possibility that the other could be anything other than a human being.

7. Can a Dog Have a Face?

Humanism has to be denounced only because it is not sufficiently human.

(Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*)

Can a dog have a face? Can a snake? What about a rock? Levinas has written virtually nothing on the implications of his ethics for nonhumans. For Levinas the face is a human face, it is a face capable of reason and language, a face that can say "thou shall not murder." Can animals have a face? Levinas answers in an interview: "I don't know if a snake has a face. I can't answer that question. A more specific analysis is needed" (Clark 181). In his essay, "The Name of the Dog, or Natural Rights," Levinas describes how Bobby, the dog that survived in a wild corner of the concentration camp in which Levinas was detained during the Second World War, was the only consciousness in the camp that did not strip the prisoners of their "human skin" (153). The dog recognized their faces as the faces of men. In attributing this ability to Bobby, however, Levinas is insistent that we not sentimentalize the dog and that we do not turn him into a figure: "But enough of allegories!…the dog is a dog. Literally a dog!" (152). On the one hand this statement suggests Levinas's desire to avoid anthropomorphism, to avoid rendering the dog figuratively in a frozen, anthropocentric "shadow" of reality. On the other hand, however, despite attributing to Bobby the ability to respond to the face, Levinas still sees him as a dog sealed in his animal category. This point is underscored at the end of the essay where Levinas comments on Bobby's lack of brain power, which ultimately prevents him from universalizing the "maxims and drives" necessary to make him a "Kantian" (which is itself, ironically, an anthropomorphism) (153). David Clark, in his essay "On Being 'the last Kantian in Nazi Germany'," points out the ways in which Levinas's treatment of Bobby the dog ends up creating a continuum of who has the potential to have a face (182). Humans, dogs and snakes are not equal in this regard.

In *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience* John Llewelyn observes that in Levinas's ethics the encounter with Bobby the dog reinforces the limited notion that one "can have direct responsibilities only toward beings that can speak" (58). I would suggest, however, that if we are to understand the "saying" as a speaking that is not reducible to rational categories, then can we not understand "language" as a form of communication that potentially exceeds its own categorically human limits? In other words, the saying, I would argue, asks us (in terms consistent with how I have been describing metaphoricity) to think language and non-language together.

What is important about metaphoricity in the context of environmental ethics is that it requires we think inside and outside of distinct language-games. That is, if we think of language as only human language, communication as only human communication, and time as only human time, then we fail to be open to the otherness of these concepts, to their different forms of expression. Dogs make demands of us, but they do not do so in our language. Nonetheless, it goes without saying that dogs communicate with us and respond to us outside of the strictures of linguistic vocalization and grammar. In an essay on Sylvia Plath and Levinas, Scott DeShong remarks that in the face to face encounter "the affective dimension of the other is primary to discernable contours or articulable characteristics of the other" (1). Before we can make sense of the other we are faced with its imperative, which is not reducible to description. In other words, the imperative of the other, in escaping thematization, escapes the confines of language-games. Why can we not think of the face of a dog as underscoring the affective dimension of the ethical encounter over the role of any coherent and rational speaking?

Is the face simply a face? What are the limits of a face? In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas notes significantly that "the whole body—a hand or a curve of the shoulder—can express as the face" (262). Similarly, in *Otherwise than Being* he points out that the face is "weighed down with a skin"; faciality, in other words, is extended to the skin, which in turn can be extended to the rest of the body (85). In an essay that attempts to read Levinasian ethics in the context of environmentalism, Christian Diehm argues, given Levinas's associations of the body to the face, that "the face-to-face is necessarily, a body-to-body" relationship (55). This is a potentially fruitful extension of Levinas's ethical model to include the nonhuman. It forces us, as Diehm points out, "to recognize that there is an incredible multiplicity of ethical demands emanating from an incredible multiplicity of sources" (57). Can one of these sources, however, be a face that is both nonhuman and non-sentient? Can a rock have a face? In their book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Gilles Deluze and Félix Guattari argue (not specifically in the context of Levinas but in a larger meditation on faces and faciality) that "The face is not animal, but neither is it human in general; there is even something absolutely inhuman about the face" (170). They go on to argue that the face represents a "deterritorialization," which amounts to a rendering by orders of thinking; that is to say, the face becomes meaningful outside of the "territory" of any actual existence that it might possess according to the order of different kinds of reason, different ways of thinking the face (171). The face, they point out, "has a correlate of great importance: the landscape, which is not just a milieu but a deterritorialized world" (172).

While there are important differences between Deluze and Guattari's approach to the face and that explored in Levinas's work, the association made in *A Thousand Plateaus* between the face and landscape, between the face and the larger, elemental earth is significant for my purposes. If we give the rainforest a face, for example, we are deterritorializing it from the category of rainforest, but we are also potentially approaching it in a way that raises the question of our own responsibility to its rightful existence. If our ethical responsibility is based on the other's need for us (as Levinas suggests) then in the face of the environment, as John Llewelyn points out in the only book-length study of Levinas and the environment (*The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience*) that need can be "a need not to be interfered with" (266).[7] Moreover, to approach the environment as a face may also amount to an honest acknowledgement of our own inextricably human perspective on the world. McKay, for example, chooses to see Levinas's face in his book *Vis à Vis* as a humble gesture to the other that acknowledges this inescapably human outlook: "in 'giving things a face' the emphasis falls on the gift, the way, for example, a linguistic community might honour a stranger by conferring upon her a name in their language" (99). In this way facing the environment is not simply an act of thoughtless anthropomorphism; rather it is an approach to the world that makes a matter of responsibility (that is to say, responsibility is directed toward a discrete materiality) at the same time as it confirms faciality to be an example (a gift, a homage, a metaphor), as something that does not stand for the environment as such, that does not close it into a totalized definition. Given this dynamic, facing the environment is to approach the otherness of landscape, of dogs, of red-winged blackbirds, of the elemental, as material metaphoricity. In light of the poets I am considering, Don McKay offers a particularly helpful perspective on Levinas, materiality, and the question of the environment because, as I argue below in closing this chapter, he inflects some of Levinas's lengthy discussions about elements, things, and dwellings (there is after all much of the phenomenologist in Levinas) toward a more environmentally lyrical ethics.

8. The Ethics of Anthropomorphism: McKay and Levinas

In his essay, "Baler Twine: Thoughts on Ravens, Home, and Nature Poetry," Don McKay speculates on how best to respond when confronted with a mutilated Raven hanging by a string at the end of a driveway in rural New Brunswick. This episode provides McKay with an opportunity to discuss what is at stake in the lyric poet's contemplation of nature. In what way is the poet responsible to the world in the act of writing and, in particular, in his or her recourse to anthropomorphism? McKay engages the thinking of Levinas in order to posit what amounts to a defense of the ethics of anthropomorphism as a lyric responsibility to the "wilderness" that is a necessary constituent of our relationships with the phenomenal world. The employment of Levinas, however, is not without its difficulties in terms of providing unqualified support for McKay's claims. Levinas's writings, particularly, as I've already outlined, his early essay "Reality and Its Shadow," raise serious doubts about the ethics of poetry, or more precisely about the ability of the poetic image to avoid freezing an object outside of time and outside of responsibility. An additional impediment, as I've discussed, is Levinas's doubts about the applicability of his theory to conceptions of ethical relationships in human interactions with the natural world.

McKay provides a way for us to think of the ethics of anthropomorphism by interrupting aspects of Levinas thinking that totalize the idea of "dwelling," "things," and, consequently, the category of the nonhuman. McKay's interest in what he calls "translation" is potentially, in Levinasian thinking, an ethical transgression, a reduction of the other to the same. What does McKay mean by "translation"? The significance of McKay's ethics in this essay is that poetic attention, translation, and the anthropomorphic moment they allow, create an articulatory dynamic in the poem in which images are offered while they at once relinquish their totalizing authority. McKay's essay modifies Levinas's understanding of the enjoyment of "things" by infusing this moment with the irreducible and ungraspable "elemental." While not stating this purpose explicitly, McKay's essay offers a re-orientation of aspects of Levinas's thinking in order to face what is other to Levinas's other, in other words, the nonhuman face.

In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas writes that "we live from 'good soup,' air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep, etc.…these are not objects of representation. We live from them" (110). In other words, things are not simply tools or implements they are, as he says, "objects of enjoyment" (110). However, enjoyment, as I mentioned earlier, has as its end nourishment, which, as Levinas explains, is a reduction of the other to the same. We enjoy things and in doing so we cancel their otherness. Levinas goes on to point out that we enjoy things against a background of elements that ultimately surrounds us and resists any complete appropriation (like the sea, for example, or the wind). Elements are ungraspable, yet we bathe in them as we enjoy our things. Our interaction with elements is restricted to surfaces; we come to their sides (faces?) without being able to chart their depths or know their other dimensions. We can overcome the elemental by building a domicile. This dwelling, for Levinas, is where we domesticate the elemental; it occurs on the sides where we moor our boats or cultivate our fields. Dwelling in this sense is about interrupting the rule of the element, bringing part of it into ourselves where, as Levinas says, "the 'I' is thus at home with itself" (132).

Can we think of home differently, though? "What if," as John Sallis suggests in his essay "Levinas and the Elemental," "the home, in sheltering one from the elements, does not also make it possible to sustain a certain comportment to the elemental, to remain…on the earth and elevated toward the sky, existing in the between" (159). Is enjoyment and its reduction of the other to the same the only way to comport oneself to the elemental? Sallis asks: "Could the elemental provoke a comportment that, rather than leading to self-reversion, would be drawn along in the withdrawal, responsive rather than reactive to the very strangeness of the earth?" (159).

This is precisely the question I think McKay implicitly engages in his discussion of home, and nature poetry in "Baler Twine." McKay employs Levinas's conception of the other, which he recasts in his term "wilderness," and he also explicitly alludes to Levinas's notion of the "primordial grasp" which he in part accepts as our possessive enjoyment of things. However, McKay implicitly questions, through the discussion of his poetics in this essay, other aspects of Levinas's thinking. He interrupts the totality of "things," and hinges "enjoyment," and poetic figures as partial fixities, as examples of material metaphoricity that keep the question of certainty suspended in any resting place of making sense of discrete objects. Moreover, the capacity of the anthropomorphic metaphor to resonate, and in so doing to open a place for the other, challenges Levinas's criticism of the poetic image as being a totalized fixity.

"Wilderness," McKay stresses in a way that links it to Levinas's conception of alterity, is that capacity of all things to remain free of the mind's appropriations ("Baler" 21). "Poetic attention" is an orientation or comportment toward things that attends to this wilderness—it is, I would suggest, an attention that attends according to the dynamic of metaphoricity. For McKay poetic attention "is a form of knowing which," alluding to Levinas here, "counters the 'primordial grasp' in home-making, and celebrates the wilderness of the other…this kind of knowing remains in touch with perception" (26-27). McKay does not see the establishment of home and the possession of the other as one's interior as constituting the same kind of threat to responsibility. The enjoyment of things, the grasping of them to constitute and nourish the self is not connected by default to the totalized establishment of one's authority. McKay writes that "home is also the site of our appreciation of the material world, where we lavish attention on its details, where we collaborate with it. In fact, it often seems that home, far from being just a concretization of self, is the place where it pours itself out into the world, interiority opening itself to material expression" (23). The significance of this is that it allows us to understand Levinas's "things" to be involved in an articulation to "elements." McKay's concept of wilderness and the orientation or attention that it demands of us, renders elements not simply in the Levinasian sense as a background from which things are plucked and enjoyed, but rather as involved as a partial constituent of things themselves; the elemental is, in McKay's terms, the wilderness in the coat hanger, the illicit desire of the tool to behave like an animal ("Baler" 21). I do not mean that it is literally the elemental that is hinged within things; it is not the air or ocean that forms part of the armchair, although, from the perspective of the periodic table there may well be an argument for seeing elements this way. The elemental in things is that ungraspable quality that is analogous to McKay's notion of wilderness. The elemental, however, is also inescapably of the world of things.

McKay conceives of home in the terms of material metaphoricity, as an articulation, a nodal point between the attempt to fix an identity and "to give [identity] away with an extended palm" (23). Thus, any totalizing force that is at work in the act of home making is interrupted by this relinquishing. But what is relinquished? What is given up? For the answer we must look to lyric poetry. McKay sees home-making as analogous to nature poetry.[8] Poetic attention offers the openness in knowing that counters the primordial, possessing grasp of language. What is offered, or made possible, more specifically by poetic attention is "translation." McKay writes that anthropomorphism "performs the translation that is at the heart of being human" (29). Translation is the relational metaphoricity between the self and the other. It is not, I would argue, about the reduction of the natural world into systems of language as much as it is about the self-conscious limitations of any particular language-game; it is the thoughtful enactment of resonance between language-games. Indeed, given McKay's comic sensibilities, anthropomorphic moves in his work are often "games" in the sense that they at once expose the frequently ridiculous limitations of linguistic meaning and the playfulness of language's referential resources. Anthropomorphic play results in a translation that gives "a gift to the other from the dwelling you will never build there" (31). What is given in translation is, I would argue, resemblance. Although McKay does not refer to resemblance as such, his examples of translation are examples of resemblance: "Growths on this stump remind you that the Japanese call certain fungi 'tree ears'; the Red Pine around them are a ceremonial parade for Moustache Day: you see ravens playing on the Athabaska River and think 'boys on a raft'"(31). You will recall that Levinas's objection to resemblance is that it is a shadow of reality, a dead time of images that bemuses and lulls the reader out of responsibility through its captivating rhythm. Moreover, the non-figurative, pure-expression of the face is not the product of a resemblance. How are we to think, then, the ethics of McKay's use of resemblance through figurative language?

Levinas says that the face is a signification without context; he says in *Ethics and Infinity* that "all signification in the usual sense of the term is relative to such a context: The meaning of something is in its relation to another thing. Here, to the contrary, the face is meaning all by itself" (86). Anthropomorphism and its gift of translation as it is understood by McKay, however, is a disarming relation—it undoes meaning in the act of positing it. It is a relation between the many different contexts of its observation; in this way it is a momentary resting place, an articulation where both categories of the comparison quit their nominal realms. In doing so the ravens and the boys on the raft are lifted out of their circumstances and articulated into a relationship that does not fix them as a new essence, but rather underscores the ecology of their relation. McKay says in an essay entitled "Remembering Apparatus," that the first act of metaphor and other related figures "is to un-name its subject, re-opening the question of reference" (69). Anthropomorphism in this sense makes a claim for sameness that is false and not false at the same time; it interrupts a totalized conception of the thing or animal by leaping between language-games. You will remember that for Levinas the dog is still a dog, and that Bobby is sealed up in the category of his species. For McKay anthropomorphic figures and their attendant resemblances are not to be avoided but rather, as he says, to be enacted "thoughtfully" (29) because they raise the question of reference and point to the gap in knowing where the wilderness resides. The images interrupt knowing rather than freeze it.

Is the poetic image still outside of time? The nodal point of translation, the questions of categorical limits that are raised by resemblance for McKay, foreground the apparatus-nature of poetic language. "Apparatus" is a term he applies to the residual wilderness that reveals itself in tools. Part of the translator's task is to have reverence for the source and to incorporate a remembrance of language as apparatus. The result of this would be that lyric poetry is never wholly complete; it always flirts with its own limits, its own wilderness rears up and interrupts its translations. Levinas's criticism is that the image refers to its own reality divorced from participation with an actual reality. McKay invites us to think of the shadow as being incapable of pulling off the divorce. It is always distracted by poetic attention, by its attendance to the moment of perception. Indeed, McKay also invites us to consider that thoughtful, responsible engagement with the world participates in anthropomorphic translation and that any "reality" must be understood to be constituted as a result of this dynamic of metaphoricity. This is where time becomes important. To return to the moment of perception, to undo the idea of the object as a discrete entity, is to attend at once to the trace of what precedes the thing and also to the potentiality of its otherness, that is to say, its futurity—that which it will be according to its own designs. To me this suggests not a relationship with a dead time, but with an infinite time, which, as Levinas points out at the beginning of *Totality and Infinity*, is central to ethics.

The play and enjoyment that is a reduction of the other to the same for Levinas is here interrupted by McKay to reveal the elemental wilderness that inhabits things. The ravens or the coat-hanger cannot be possessed in poetic attention because resemblances that emerge out of translation resonate and provide merely a resting place for making sense, rather than a definitive point of totalized knowing. The anthropomorphic image is a nodal point that is responsible to both our inability to represent non-linguistic raw-experience and our desire for just this. McKay describes the resonance of metaphor as being a "nook of revery, [a] listening post…where we can pause for a moment" (*Vis* 72). Levinas says that a being expresses by presenting itself, where "presentation" is taken to mean a "putting into question in an ethical relation" (*TI* 200, 206). The raven that McKay cuts down from the baler twine is not permitted to put into question the category of raven precisely because it has been subjected to an attempt at fixity, its death has been controlled. McKay responds to the bird in its death, in its desire, as he points out, to rejoin the elements, by burying it in a hollow where no one is likely to find it. Poetic attention and its resultant anthropomorphism are involved in an enjoyment that challenges Levinas's objections by presenting nodal points, hinges of inquiry, articulations between things and elements, between the self and the non-human other, and between the poetic image and wilderness. They offer moments of resemblance, which give access to the syntax, to the rhythm that, in the absence of totalized knowing, is the expression on the face of the other both human and nonhuman.

9. I-You: Facing the Stone in the Sun

McKay's contention that thoughtfully enacted anthropomorphism can lead to an ethical relation with the nonhuman world has, besides Levinas, another potential philosophical correlate. The face that McKay considers to be an anthropomorphic gift of homage to the other is not unlike the relationship that Martin Buber describes as I-You in his book *I and Thou*. There are, Buber argues, two basic relationships that reflect our interactions with the world: I-You and I-It. To be in an I-It relation is to approach the world as a system of objects, where one is confident of facts and truths and able to manipulate things. In other words, to see things as It is to approach them in the terms of the "said" that I discussed in Levinas, and in terms of discrete objectification that I discussed in light of ecocritical realism. As Buber notes: "When a culture is no longer centred in a living and continually renewed relational process, it freezes into the It-world" (103). Conversely, to be in an I-You relation is to be responsible to the other in a way that does not involve a reduction of difference to the parameters of systematic thinking. Buber explains it thus: "When I confront a human being as my You and speak the basic word I-You…He is no longer He or She, limited by other Hes and Shes, a dot in the world grid of space and time, nor a condition that can be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. Neighborless and seamless, he is You and fills the firmament" (59). The I-You relationship is, I would argue, an example of metaphoricity inasmuch as it involves a relation that does not totalize, that is open to the larger articulated relationship of a being within his or her worldly context. It is important to remember, however, that humans live necessarily between both I-It and I-You relations, just as one must also live between the literal and the figurative.

When we say You to someone we are, in short, encountering them as persons rather than objects. In an essay on Buber and environmental ethics John Tallmadge suggests that this approach "is not mere projection or personification, both of which as actions which attribute qualities to other beings, belong to the realm of It. Rather…a being so encountered is not perceived as an object but met as a presence" (353-354). Indeed, McKay's anthropomorphic face is similarly not simply a projection or a personification but a self-consciously limited metaphor that gives the other a gift from the human world, the gift of a face. Tallmadge goes on to argue that as an imperative for environmental ethics we must say You to the landscape. Part of what is involved in such a relation is, as Tallmadge describes it, reminiscent, I would argue, of McKay's notion of poetic attention: "someone desiring the encounter with You cannot predict a relational event; he can only prepare himself for it by practicing appropriate habits of mind" (Tallmadge 355). This is not unlike what the nature poet must do according to McKay. Tallmadge argues that the best way to "reemphasize the 'personhood' of the land" is to go hiking, to enter into intimate relations with one's environment (357). The face, for McKay, however, is also an acknowledgement that the natural world is not a person, that its otherness escapes the gift of the face. Nonetheless, to see things as possessing faces is to see clearly one's responsibility in more obvious terms.

In many ways Buber's philosophy of relationships is very similar to that explored in Levinas's work. Indeed, Levinas was in no small way influenced by Buber. However, I close this chapter with a brief look at the implications of some of Buber's claims for I-You relations with the nonhuman world that anticipate some aspects of my discussion about the elemental in the following chapters. In an earlier book *Daniel* (1913) Buber comments upon coming across a piece of mica on the road. It had picked up sunlight and reflected it marvelously back at him.

> And suddenly, as I looked away, I realized that while looking at it I had known nothing of 'object' and 'subject'; as I looked, the piece of mica and 'I' had been one; as I looked, I had tasted unity. I looked at it again, but unity did not return. Then something flamed up inside me as if I were about to create. I closed my eye, I concentrated my strength, I entered into an association with my object, I raised the piece

> of mica into the realm of that which has being. And then, Lucas, only then did I feel: *I*; only then was I. He that had looked had not yet been I; only this, this being in association bore the name like a crown." (qtd. in *I and Thou* 146)[9]

This being in association, this being according to relation is at the heart of my claims about metaphoricity and lyric ethics. The relationship with the piece of mica underscores an articulatory dynamic; it is the giving of exemplarity to the object so that the object is not objectified but escapes its categories. Moreover, the subject is constituted in relation to the otherness of the rock. While Buber's emphasis on the confirmation of his own subjectivity, his own "I," is potentially problematic inasmuch as it returns his attention to himself instead of turning it outward, there is clearly the sense of an ecological relation with the piece of mica—the boundaries that separate them as subject and object are momentarily suspended. *I and Thou* also explores to some degree the attempt to have an I-You relationship with the nonhuman world. Buber maintains that by approaching a tree as a You one has access to the tree itself, though this idea is not developed beyond this preliminary stage.[10]

Martin Buber's notion of the I-You relation offers us a way to think of anthropomorphism as lyric ethics, as a relational dynamic that does not necessarily reduce the other to the same. Moreover, his engagement with rocks, with the elemental, as a means of describing potentially ethical relations involves the surrounding environment in a way that is not normally considered in environmental ethics, where the focus is largely on the nonhuman animal. In the next chapter I explore the elemental as it relates to both time and materiality. McKay, Graham, and Zwicky are, through their poetry, archivists of the elemental; that is, the question of time is explored in their work through a consideration of elemental materiality. Bedrock, air, and ocean, represent the materiality of the world that cannot be grasped and easily objectified, and that requires, through the archival records of fossils, tides, and storms, a reckoning with the different times of things. I want to argue that, like matter and ethics, archives have a lyrical structure by virtue of their relationship to temporal plurality.

Notes

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[1] Altieri only mentions Levinas once in conjunction with his discussion about this kind of ethical criticism; later in the essay he refers to "deconstructive and Heideggerean versions of letting be" (55).

[2] There are theories that treat metaphorical utterances as shortened similes. These theories propose to explain metaphor in terms of what is literally expressed in the comparison revealed by the simile. See John R. Searle's essay "Metaphor" (in *Metaphor and Thought*, edited by Andrew Ortony) for a more thorough discussion of this theory. For my purposes, the difficulty of paraphrasing a poetic employment of simile is due to the same factors that inhibit an exhaustive expression of what a metaphor means. Moreover, in proposing that something is "like" something is also to accept that it is "not like" the thing in question. This is another inflection of the ontological ambivalence at the heart of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity.

[3] In *Deep Ecology*, Bill Devall and George Sessions propose what they call "biocentric equality," which means "that all things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom" (67). The authors point to a number of examples where, in order to defend their activities legally, environmental activists have extended the category of human rights to include rainforests, dolphins, and the larger nonhuman world. See also Frederic L. Bender's *The Culture of Extinction* for a discussion of the complex ways in which rights are extended to the nonhuman.

[4] In another essay that considers the role of figures in Levinas's ethics, Jill Robbins wonders in "Visage, Figure: Reading Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*" that "if the face can indeed be a figure, are we sure that we know what we mean by 'figure'? Is not 'figuration' itself transformed by such a usage?" (144). One of the major points that I am making is that we need to think of metaphor differently. It cannot simply be seen as a truncated simile, or as somehow translatable into the language of systems and reason. In attempting to write about metaphoricity it is my aim to provide a kind of malleable body to a concept that remains open to multiplicity and resonance. Thus, I would propose that the concept of "figuration" is indeed transformed if we think of Levinas's ethics in the context of metaphoricity.

[5] In *Toy Medium* Daniel Tiffany discusses at length the corpuscular theories of early materialist philosophy, arguing that "in the context of Baroque natural philosophy, the automaton served as a model not only of the visible mechanism of the body but also of the invisible foundation of material substance—the realm of atoms" (35).

[6] It should be pointed out, however, that Levinas complicates this notion of enjoyment in productive ways in his later work *Otherwise Than Being*. In this later book enjoyment does indeed return us to ourselves, but we need this complacency in order to have it interrupted by the other. As Levinas points out: "Enjoyment in its ability to be complacent in itself, exempt from dialectical tensions, is the condition of the for-the-other involved in sensibility…And to be torn from oneself despite oneself has meaning only as a being torn from the complacency in oneself characteristic of enjoyment, snatching the bread from one's mouth." (74). We need enjoyment inasmuch as it is a condition for being opened to the other. This, I would argue, is an example of metaphoricity: metaphor depends on the literal, on totality, the same way sensibility (and its exposedness to the other) depends on enjoyment and the complacency it produces.

[7] John Llewelyn's book *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience: A Chiasmic Reading of Responsibility in the Neighbourhood of Levinas, Heidegger and Others* brings together Heidegger's fourfold with Levinas's face. Llewelyn interrupts the system of the fourfold by reading the face into it,

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and then adding that it is not only another human but also a nonhuman with which we can have a face to face encounter.

[8] McKay sees himself unabashedly as a "nature poet," remarking in "Baler Twine" that "Admitting that you are a nature poet, nowadays, may make you seem something of a fool, as though you'd owned up to being a Sunday painter at, say, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design" (25). While he acknowledges that there are some good reasons for this, he also wants to make a claim for the thoughtful practice of the discipline.

[9] I have quoted Walter Kaufmann's footnote in *I and Thou*. There is no information to suggest that the footnote is not Kaufmann's translation of the original passage from the German publication of *Daniel*. The only full-length English translation of *Daniel* that I could find (by Maurice Friedman in 1964) used very archaic language to describe this particular scene (140-41).

[10] I focus on Levinas rather than Buber in this project because, in addition to what I have indicated here in terms of the piece of mica, Buber does not develop his work on the relational dynamic between the self and other to nearly the same extent as Levinas. In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas acknowledges the importance of Buber to his work while also arguing that Buber does not fully address the complexities of the relations he describes: "They remain, in a sort of disdainful spiritualism, unexplored and unexplained. This work [*Totality and Infinity*] does not have the ridiculous pretension of 'correcting' Buber on these points. It is placed in a different perspective, by starting with the idea of the Infinite" (69). The centrality of infinity to Levinas is also what makes him far more important than Buber to my discussion of time in the relational dynamic of metaphoricity.

4. LYRIC TIME

This is the first thing
I have understood:
Time is the echo of an axe
Within a wood.

(Philip Larkin, "'This is the first thing'")

In approaching the other I am always late for the meeting.

(Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*)

1. Time and Metaphor

In 1650 Anglican Archbishop James Ussher, Primate of Ireland, calculated the exact time of the earth's creation: nine o'clock in the morning, October 23, 4004 BC (Wright, R. 11). Since Ussher's influential chronology, our sense of the how old the earth is has changed considerably. Isaac Newton lived in a world that was six thousand years old. Within 200 hundred years, through the geologically inspired discovery and development of "deep time," the age of the planet increased by millions of years to finally arrive, according to contemporary estimates, at 4.5 billion years (Lutgens 5). "Deep time" is the phrase coined by John McPhee in his book *Basin and Range* to describe this immense, temporal distance illuminated and excavated by the geological sciences.[1] How does one make sense of such vast stretches of time? Metaphors abound. For example, Mark Twain writes: "If the Eiffel Tower were now representing the world's age, the skin of paint on the pinnacle-knob at its summit would represent man's share of that age"; similarly, John

McPhee observes: “Consider the earth’s history as the old measure of the English yard, the distance from the king’s nose to the tip of his outstretched hand. One stroke of a nail file on his middle finger erases human history” (Gould *TA* 2, 3). It is difficult in light of deep time to comprehend, for example, the passage of eons that separates the origins of a girl from the pebble she throws absentmindedly into a river. Indeed, as Stephen Jay Gould observes, “Deep time is so alien that we can really only comprehend it as metaphor” (*TA* 3).

Metaphor and time: these are the central concerns of this chapter. Just as metaphor is bound up with questions of materiality, which I have been discussing in detail up to this point, I wish to claim that metaphor is not only intimately involved with our attempts to understand time, but it is also a function of our responsible experience of time. Lyric time is the apprehension of temporality in light of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity.[2] Lyric time is, I argue, apprehended only through metaphorical thinking; it is not reducible to the objectified dimensions of Newtonian time. As Zwicky points out in *Lyric Philosophy*, “The idea of Newtonian time is the idea of a solitary axis of experience *set against* space. It is the root of logico-linguistic syntax” (L276).[3] Therefore, to think in lyric time is to apprehend “temporal metaphoricity”; it is to interrupt the notion of time as a solitary axis, and to make sense of the possibility of approaching the different times of things. What is the time of a birch tree? A glacier? It is with these questions, accountable not only to the different matter of the nonhuman other, but also to the different time of the nonhuman other, that my theory of lyric ethics culminates.

I approach the metaphoricity of temporality from three related perspectives in this chapter: geological deep time, the structure of archives, and the phenomenological experience of time. I begin this chapter by examining the metaphoricity inherent in the concept of "deep time." Deep time is important for my purposes because it is an attempt to reckon with nonhuman temporality, with the very age of the earth itself. Given its irreducibility to conventional human terms, it is, as I outlined above, accessible only through metaphor. The exploration of deep time in Stephen Jay Gould's book *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* is an illustration of the metaphoricity of the apprehension of deep time in the intellectual history of geology. Moreover, Gould's book provides a glimpse of the metaphoricity of the structure of archives inasmuch as his attempt to correct the traditional textbook explanation of geological history is also an attempt to approach the archive in a way that involves its seemingly paradoxical elements (that is, ostensibly conflicting scientific programs) in an interrelationship that is suggestive of the dynamic of metaphoricity.

In the next section I argue, in light of the discussion of the geological archive, and through an examination of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, that the form of an archive is the form of metaphor. Given the intersection between a plurality of times and spaces that refuse strict representational categorization, archives reflect the "is/is not" dynamic of metaphoricity, the movement among and between contexts of matter and time. Nature, as a function of deep time and the processes of geology, can also be approached as an archive that posits space and time in relation.

This discussion of archives sets the stage for the next section of this chapter that deals with the archival impulse of ecocriticism. The burgeoning field of ecocriticism is very much engaged with the archival recuperation of what some see as a repressed tradition of nature writing, or a repression of the natural conditions of canonical texts. Despite this implicit interest in the temporality of archives, however, time is too often subordinated to place in ecocriticism. The complexities of temporality are not considered in ecocritical investigations. How are we to make sense of time in environmental ethics? Zwicky maintains that we cannot "see" time "as" and, therefore, we cannot understand it as such. How is metaphor involved in apprehending the time of the nonhuman other?

Metaphor, by bringing time into play without presupposing the idea of time, allows an ethical relation with things where time remains different, where it is approached without being understood; however, the trace of other times affects us. I focus on the trace of other times in the last section of the chapter. The trace is important because in Levinas's work it presupposes a relationship between an immemorial past and an infinite future, which allows us to think of it as an expression of deep time. I argue that the face to face encounter can be considered an archival encounter where one is responsible to the deep time of the other. Archives require us to reckon with the relationship between a multiplicity of times and spaces. There is, therefore, an inherent proximity between thinking time and thinking matter or being.

Heidegger's notion of what I call "archival being" is extended beyond the boundaries of the self in Levinas's face to face encounter to encompass unknowable time, the potential for nonhuman time. When we approach the natural world as an archive, as an articulation of temporal pluralities, we are apprehending it in the terms of metaphoricity, in the terms of lyric time. As a function of the archival encounter in the face to face, the deep time of the other is involved in own my time, interrupting my time, emphasizing the dynamic of metaphoricity that subtends our ecology of times. This is the ethical potential of lyric time. To begin, however, in order to ground this discussion of temporality, let us consider the metaphoricity inherent in the concept of deep time

2. The Metaphoricity of Deep Time

I used to sit in class and listen to the terms come floating down the room like paper airplanes. Geology was called a descriptive science…It was a fountain of metaphor.

(John McPhee, *Basin and Range*)

In his book *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* Stephen Jay Gould examines the two grand metaphors that have characterized our conceptions of temporality: time as a progression of autonomous instances (an arrow), and time as repetition, as historically nonspecific (a cycle). The origins of geology involve a struggle between these competing metaphors for time. On the one hand, biblical chronology provides a narrative; God created the earth and all of its characteristics—physical geography, weather—and intends for it a future destiny of His own design. Conversely, the recognition by geologist James Hutton in the 1780s that rocks do not continuously erode into ruin but are subject to restorative forces of uplift, presupposes the idea that the earth is involved in a cyclical regeneration of its terrestrial environment (*TA* 6). The very conflict between these competing visions of temporality is central, Gould argues, to a complete understanding of deep time: "We can grasp the discovery of deep time when we recognize the metaphors underlying several centuries of debate as a common heritage of all people who have ever struggled with such basic riddles as direction and immanence" (8).

Gould's work on the intellectual history of deep time is important for my purposes for two primary reasons. First, his discussion demonstrates the metaphoricity at stake in conceptions of temporality. His examination of Thomas Burnet, James Hutton, and Charles Lyell reveals an articulatory dynamic in the very approach to the nature of temporality pursed by these scientists, undermining the rigid dichotomies that ostensibly dominate their various arguments. Second, the tension between time's arrow and time's cycle, as expressed in the "distorted" archive of geology's intellectual history (Lyell and others have misread and have been misread on purpose in order to champion one metaphorical approach over another), involves both an attempt to suppress and the failure to suppress the metaphoricity of the archive itself. Gould's work underscores the centrality of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity to the structure of archives. I will explain in more comprehensive terms what I mean by the metaphoricity of time and archives—and how they are important as lyrical dynamics to my theory of lyric ethics—as I go along; however, as a preliminary foray into these matters, and in order to set the stage, let me begin with the example of Gould and the metaphoricity of conceptions of time.

Contemporary emphasis on ideas of progress and development, facilitated in no small way by technological revolutions, have entrenched time's arrow, according to Gould, as the most familiar Western metaphor for temporality. In addition to the narrative of the bible, Darwin's theory of evolution, and capitalist promises of the "American Dream," time's arrow has become the metaphor used to conceive of both the past and the future, where distinct historical moments proceed from one to the next. We are, as the story goes, getting better over time. However, as Gould points out, time has not always been conceived as an arrow; in fact "most people throughout history have held fast to time's cycle, and have viewed time's arrow as either unintelligible or a source of deepest fear" (12). Moreover, the way in which these two metaphors have been meaningful to different cultures has not remained fixed. However, so deeply ingrained are the metaphors of arrow and cycle in Western thinking of temporality that, Gould argues, the discovery of geological time could scarcely proceed without their dual influence (13). For a proper understanding of the origins of deep time we must, therefore, attend to the interaction between these metaphors, to their articulatory involvement in the conception of temporality: "We in our world of time's arrow, will never understand the twin 'fathers' of our profession unless we recover their vision and their metaphor" (15).

By stressing the dual involvement of the metaphors of arrow and cycle, I argue that Gould presents a model of a developing sense of temporality that expresses the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. That is to say, it is not simply metaphors of time that are at stake in the development of deep time; rather, it is the way that each is articulated to the other, involved in a resonant relationship that does not eliminate one metaphor or the other but preserves the distinct nature of each. I call this articulatory dynamic, this lyric structure at the heart of the conception of deep time, "temporal metaphoricity." As Gould points out, "time's arrow is the intelligibility of distinct and irreversible events, while time's cycle is the intelligibility of timeless order and lawlike structure. We must have them both" (15-16).

This articulatory dynamic, this involvement of arrow and cycle, is evident at the very origins of the debate over deep time. Gould examines the work of Thomas Burnett, James Hutton, and Charles Lyell in order to demonstrate that, despite ostensible allegiances to one metaphor or the other, each is ultimately forced by the demands of their nuanced thinking to allow that both arrow and cycle are inextricably involved in thinking deep time. Burnett's four volume work *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1680-1690) was the object of much critical scorn by his geological successors, in large measure because these antagonists, James Hutton (*Theory of the Earth*, 1795) and Charles Lyell (*Principles of Geology*, 1830-1833), adhered, Gould argues, to a different metaphor for temporality. Burnett was often dismissed by Hutton and Lyell as a scientist overly influenced by "poetic fiction" and "imagination" (23). He was, moreover, dismissed as a creationist for his attempts to reconcile the chronology of the bible with geological time. Hutton and Lyell both saw themselves, according to Gould, as adherents to the cyclical nature of temporality; they vigorously resisted catastrophist and creationist readings of the geological record in favour of a view of the earth devoid of historical progression and subject to the endless cycles of geomorphology. Burnett, consequently, was dismissed for his naïve faith in time's arrow. Gould illustrates, however, that a closer examination of Burnett's work, especially the frontispiece to his major work, reveals that both metaphors of arrow and cycle are necessary for a complete understanding of Burnett's position.[4] Burnett's theory holds that the earth is progressing from creation towards its eventual destiny as a star; however, within this temporal arrow there are repetitive cycles that render the earth twice in a state of paradise and twice leveled by elemental forces (flood and fire): "time's cycle pervades the *Sacred Theory* as surely as time's arrow. The arrow moves forward within a framework of repetition that forms the signature of inherent order and good sense in the cosmos" (46). Despite the criticisms of Hutton and Lyell, despite the attempts to reinforce the dichotomy between metaphors of arrow and cycle, Burnett's approach to temporality is an articulation between both metaphors. In fact, it is the articulation itself, the resonant connection between arrow and cycle, the fact that both require each other in Burnett's model that is significant for my purposes. This is an example of metaphoricity; it is not the case that a single metaphor explains the temporal dynamic at stake in Burnett's model; rather, it is the "is" and "is not" of both metaphors that are held in relation.

The same holds true in the case of Hutton and Lyell, where in the attempt to emphasize their co-developed theory of "uniformitarianism," each subordinates the role of historical change (and each have been read as such by geological historians who have perpetuated old dichotomies) in favour of an a-historical cyclical view of time. Despite these ostensible allegiances to a-historicity, each wrestled with the problem of history in complicated ways. Hutton, for example, when confronted with the problems of beginnings and ends in the logic of his temporal cycle, appeals to a higher power beyond natural laws, a higher power that cannot be dealt with, he claims, in the context of his science (92). He absolves himself of the problem of history by relegating it to the realm of non-science as pseudo-theology. Nonetheless, the question of history enters his work and forces him to acknowledge a potentially theological perspective—one he had ridiculed in Burnett for its implications of earthly destiny.[5] Similarly, Lyell railed against catastrophist views of the earth that contradicted his cyclical uniformitarianism principle, which also led him at first to reject Darwin's theory of evolution, with its emphasis on unique historical changes. However, Lyell was, as Gould points out, ultimately a committed historian, which provoked him to amend some of his claims about the uniformity of states of erosion and acknowledge the fundamental importance of unique historical changes in the geological record. Consequently, both Hutton and Lyell have more at stake than the metaphor of cycles in their conceptions of temporality. Rather, as in the case of Burnett, these scientists are forced to apprehend time in the terms of metaphoricity, as an articulatory dynamic, as a concept not contained within the language-games of a single closed metaphor.

Earlier in my discussion (Chapter One) I discussed Zwicky's contention that metaphor involves the non-metaphorical. The non-metaphorical is a necessary constituent of metaphor because metaphor is the hinge between linguistic thinking (with its syntax and interest in distinct entities), and non-linguistic thinking (where objects cannot be contained by words and systematic logic): "Non-metaphorical language enacts the way it is with things-in-their-distinctness. Metaphorical language, as its etymology suggests, links them. But the distinctness does not *dissolve* in metaphorical connexion" (*WM* L32). This articulation of the figurative and literal within the metaphorical relation, which is the dynamic of metaphoricity that I have been discussing throughout this project, is evident, I propose, in the way that Gould characterizes the two metaphors (arrow and cycle) of time. Time's arrow expresses the distinctness of things, their particularity within what we might call a temporal language-game: "The essence of time's arrow lies in the irreversibility of history, and the unrepeatable uniqueness of each step in a sequence of events linked through time in physical connection" (194). In other words, historical events have a specific logic to their progression; different antecedents would produce a different future. In contrast to what I would suggest we can see as the literal, non-metaphorical character of time's arrow, time's cycle is cast by Gould in more figurative terms. Cycles are not the product of a specific history, but rather make links between histories, pointing to notions such as common ancestry, requiring us to think analogically in terms of time. Indeed, Gould turns to figurative links as he explains the import of time's cycle: "I type with the same bones used by a bat to fly, a cat to run, and a seal to swim because we all inherited our fingers from a common ancestor, not because laws of nature fashioned these bones independently, and in necessary arrangement" (197). Gould's description of the interdependence between arrow and cycle is a perfect example of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity, where the distinctness of things is upheld alongside expressions of likeness and analogy: "The arrow of homology and the cycle of analogy are not warring concepts, fighting for hegemony within an organism. They interact in tension to build the distinctions and likenesses of each creature" (198). This is an expression of temporal metaphoricity. The literal and figurative are brought together, the distinctness of things, and their resonant connections with other language-games (or historical progressions, in this case) are articulated together in resonant relation.

The archive of geology, according to Gould, has consistently been interpreted as upholding the closed metaphorical dichotomies surrounding the development of the concept of deep time. The advances of geological theory, explained in textbook summaries, have typically been characterized as a tidy progression from Burnet to Hutton and Lyell. However, as I have discussed, the metaphors of arrow and cycle inform the work of the later scientists just as it did their forebears. While Gould reads this misreading of the geological archives as a failure to sufficiently acknowledge the complexity with which time's arrow and cycle have interacted with each other in the theories of the day, I wish to suggest that the misreading of the archives represents a failure to acknowledge the metaphoricity of archives themselves. By reducing the terms of the historical debate surrounding geological time to the dichotomies of creationism versus uniformitarianism, (or in the context of metaphor, arrow and cycle) and by locating different scientists firmly within one camp or the other, the "cardboard histories" that Gould observes in geological textbooks contribute to an atomistic view of the archive of geological history. They also contribute to a narrative view of history which progresses through potentially more "primitive" forms of thinking to the "clarity" of recent scholarship. This is time's arrow, which, as I discussed above, is potentially a literal view of temporality.

Archives themselves are metaphorical structures; they are engaged with a plurality of times and a plurality of contexts. That is to say, the form of an archive exhibits the "is" and "is not" articulatory structure of metaphor; it involves the dynamic of metaphoricity. The textbook history of geology fails to attend to the fact that Charles Lyell, despite his attempt to champion himself as the scientist of field work and his debasement of scientists persuaded by religion, was in fact, as Gould points out, far more interested in theory and in imposing theory on "imperfect data" than the catastrophists he opposed—who had the reality of the fossil record on their side (134). Lyell "is" and "is not" the scientist of objective observation that he claims to be. On the one hand, he has presented himself as such in the context of his polemical rhetoric in *The Principles of Geology.* However, in the larger context of the scientific community of his day, this is not the case. This discrepancy in the archive is important because it reveals the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. However, it also reveals the attempt to suppress the metaphoricity of the archive, both by Lyell, who initially suppressed the involvement of time's arrow (and its emphasis on unique events) in his cyclical view of temporality, and by the textbook historians who gloss over the nuanced thinking of the catastrophists among Lyell's contemporaries in favour of a simple narrative of progression. As a corrective to conventional interpretations of the archive of geological history, Gould points to an interactive historical dynamic: "if we ask how Lyell's controlling vision has influenced modern geology, we must admit that current views represent a pretty evenly shuffled deck between attitudes held by Lyell and the catastrophists" (177). Gould's proposition, I would argue, reinforces the metaphoricity at stake in the archive of geology's intellectual history, and it is in keeping with the temporal metaphoricity he attempts to assert between the two grand metaphors of time's arrow and time's cycle.

I turn now in more detail to my claim about the metaphorical structure of archives. The difficulty with which geology has made sense of its archive is an expression of the metaphoricity of archival structure, of the fever that infects attempts to tell an objective history, of the dry rot that undermines the beams of the museum.

3. Archive: Metaphor: House

do you remember   my love my archive

(Jorie Graham, *Swarm*)

In *Archive Fever* one of Jacques Derrida's speculative entries into the question of the archive concerns the gift of a Bible in which a private inscription implicitly commemorates Sigmund Freud's circumcision. The commemoration of the circumcision, the inscription that bears its "mark," so to speak, "carries literal singularity into figurality" (20). Indeed, the "new skin" of the inscription, of the newly bound bible, is repeatedly explored in the text as a metaphor for the archive itself and for archival dynamics. This figurative reminder of an initial Freudian signature, of a childhood mark of Jewishness, of circumcision, is an archive that resists being the object of a singular representative context.

Indeed, faith in the representational status of the archive has been thrown into question more recently by critics such as Dag Petersson and his interest in fictional archives. The virtual library of artist Walid Raad's *Atlas Group Archive*, for example, collects photographs and invented personalities documenting the Lebanese civil war, and in doing so runs counter to the traditional faith in archives as "A classification system…maintain[ing] linear consistency within a growing and changing catalogue" (43). Rather, as Petersson illustrates in his essay, "Archiving the Potentialities of Events," it is precisely in the failure of the archive to specifically locate or represent the historical event that allowances are made for the coexistence of historical paradoxes, of the potential for other relationships to historical experience.

This emphasis on "potential" over "actual" archives is enacted and explored in different ways in a collection of articles that emerged out of a conference on archival theory at the University of Alberta in 2003. In their introduction to the special issue of *English Studies in Canada*, Michael O'Driscoll and Edward Bishop begin in what they describe as a "doubled and duplicitous anecdotal mode" as they recount personal experiences in archives that involved reading the intimate, vulnerable, private correspondences of well-known writers (2). O'Driscoll and Bishop observe that "*Anecdota*, in their original Latin sense, are private histories entered into the public sphere, and so the anecdote is a narrative form that bears a striking resemblance to the function and structure of the archive" (2).

The tension between the literal and figural embodied by Freud's circumcision, the tension between real and fictional historical events in the Lebanese civil war, and the tension between public and private, remembering and forgetting that O'Driscoll and Bishop discuss as instrumental to the event of the archive, all reflect an articulatory dynamic intrinsic to the structure of archives. Moreover, given the intersection between a plurality of times and spaces that refuse strict representational categorization, archives reflect the "is/is not" dynamic of metaphoricity, the movement among and between contexts of matter and time. By proposing that archives have the structure of metaphoricity, I do not wish to claim that archives are metaphors (though I certainly do wish to entertain the idea that metaphors are archives). Carolyn Steedman (*Dust*) and others have emphasized the materiality of the archive and its insistence on real rather than figurative bodies (Bishop 7).[6] Rather, I wish to argue that the structure of archives reveals the ontological ambivalence that characterizes material metaphoricity, and, more significantly given the question of temporality considered in this chapter, it also expresses temporal metaphoricity: the archive, as Derrida reminds us, is not simply about the past, but also about the future; in this way it articulates together a plurality of times. By considering Derrida's book *Archive Fever*, in particular his claims about the fictional archive of Yosef Yerushalmi, I wish to make a claim for the metaphoricity of archival structure. In addition, Derrida's emphasis on the archive as domicile, and Zwicky's emphasis on metaphor as "domestic understanding" in her book *Wisdom and Metaphor*, further underscore my claim for a homology between the structures and dynamics of archives and metaphoricity. Both Zwicky's books *Lyric Philosophy* and *Wisdom and Metaphor*, in their active employment of resonant connections between historical traditions of art and philosophy, exemplify in their formal structure the metaphoricity of archives.

The term archive is understood more in the adjectival sense than in the nominal sense; an archive is an event, a site of relationships among a plurality of times as opposed to a repository of static historical evidence. Thus, the various permutations of the term archive and archival in this project (such as "archival encounters," and "archival being") are meant to describe or be attentive to the articulatory relationships among different times that come to constitute the way in which things "matter." The archive as a dynamic, as a relationship in the terms of metaphoricity, requires that we think of time in a nonsystematic way, which interrupts anthropocentric logic that seeks to restrict the origins and destinies of the nonhuman material environment.

In *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* Jacques Derrida provides a way for us to think of a homology between the structure of archives and the structure of metaphor. According to Derrida, for an archive to be an archive it must always be subject to "archive fever." That is, something inevitably interrupts the attempt to close the archive into a determined totality. In other words, there is an ever present "is not" in any attempt to posit the "is" of the archive. As an implicit acknowledgment of this metaphoricity, of the way in which the notion of "archive fever" metaphorically crosses the boundaries of different language-games, Derrida equates this destructive impulse that haunts the archive with Freud's "death drive," which in other Freudian linguistic contexts goes by different names: aggression drive, destruction drive. The death drive "works *to destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing* but also *with a view to effacing* its own 'proper' traces—which consequently cannot properly be called 'proper'" (10). Recalling Agamben's association of the improper with the metaphorical (Chapter One), archive fever infuses the archive with an "impropriety," a figurative intervention into the literal taxonomy of time and space.

A great deal of Derrida's focus in *Archive Fever* is dedicated to the work of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi and his engagement with the theory and history of Freudian psychoanalysis. It is through a consideration of Yerushalmi's work that Derrida is inspired to claim that "The theory of psychoanalysis, then, becomes a theory of the archive and not only a theory of memory," thus extending the metaphorical implications of what constitutes an archive (19). Derrida's treatment of Yerushalmi is important for my purposes because in addition to lauding Yerushalmi's fictionalized interview with Freud for all of its imaginative and figurative implications, Derrida is critical of Yerushalmi's reflex in this imagined interview to declare historical objectivity. Yerushalmi is at once a "scholar" who "presumed continuously the knowledge of what 'science' and 'Judaism' meant" and a "historian who claims to hold himself deliberately exterior to his object" (52, 53). This is significant because in the midst of his metaphorical engagement with the archive of psychoanalysis—that is, the imagined interview with its chief architect—Yerushalmi's disinterested claims presuppose a reliance on the distinctness of concepts and circumstances in their respective language-games—he assumes what "science" and "Judaism" mean. Similarly, just as metaphor requires the distinct particularities of non-metaphoric language, so too does the structure of the archive, as demonstrated in Yerushalmi's historical enterprise, require its discrete elements. That is, Yerushalmi's recourse to being a historian who is not a psychoanalyst and yet who cannot refrain from being a psychoanalyst in the figurative implications of the imagined interview, exemplifies the *doubleness* of the archive infected with archive fever (55). This doubleness underscores the articulatory dynamic of the "is" and "is not," the intrinsic metaphoricity of the archive.

The event of the "circumcision" that I alluded to at the beginning of this section is also an example of an articulation between a discrete moment, or matter, and its larger figurative relationship with other resonant contexts. Freud's "circumcision" (the gift of the bible from Freud's father that marks it as an event) is an example where a particular historical reference, a material moment, one might say, is "seen" by Derrida "as" a metaphor for the archive itself. This "singular archive named: 'circumcision'" (42), as Derrida notes, is rendered at once as the archival activity of Yerushalmi and his attempt to "recircumcise him [Freud] by figure," (42) and as the larger issue of Psychoanalysis's relationship to archiviology: "At issue here is nothing less than taking seriously the question whether a science can depend on something like a circumcision. We are deliberately saying 'something like a circumcision' to designate the place of this problem, a place that is itself problematic, between the figure and literalness" (46).

Indeed, the importance of the articulation between the literal and the figural, between the imaginative and material, culminates with Derrida's interest in Yerushalmi's fictional interview with Freud. Through the activity of "seeing-as," the encounter with the archive becomes an encounter with the author of psychoanalysis himself: "the last chapter, the most fictive," Derrida acknowledges, "is certainly not the least true. In its own way, even if it does not say the truth, it *makes* the truth....It inspires something else in us about the truth of the truth" (59). This is a face to face encounter, so to speak, wholly enabled by metaphorical attention to the archive. It is truthful, it has meaning, by virtue of its activity. For Zwicky meaning has the form of metaphor—we understand by "seeing" something "as" (*WM* L3). Thus the fact that the archive of psychoanalysis is here made meaningful by Yerushalmi's fictive encounter is suggestive of the importance of metaphor to its structural dynamic, to its very capacity to have meaning. Moreover, Derrida describes both truth and the archive as being "spectral" (84, 87). As "spectres," I would suggest that they require apprehension through a consideration of the dynamic of metaphoricity; they require openness to the simultaneity of different material and temporal contexts.[7] As Derrida reminds us, the archive is constituted by temporal articulations. Through his discussion of the immemorial past, as embodied by the act of circumcision, Derrida emphasizes how the question of the archive is the question of the future itself (36).

What will the archive have meant? The time of an archive, its engagement with the future anterior, cannot simply be concluded as systematic and successive. Freud, for example, speaks even after his death in Yerushalmi's imagined encounter.

The word archive comes from the Greek word for house, or official residence (Derrida *Archive* 2). The house, or domicile, is central to Derrida's conception of the archive and it is also central to Zwicky's conception of metaphor. For both Derrida and Zwicky it is the nodal point of articulation, the negotiation of "between-ness" that is the dynamic central to the archive and to metaphor. Derrida reminds us at the beginning of *Archive Fever* that the archive takes place in the house, in the *domicile*, between private and public. It is in this "house arrest" that the archive takes place: "At the intersection of the topological and the nomological, of the place and the law, of the substrate and the authority, a scene of domiciliation becomes at once visible and invisible" (2, 3). This articulation between the visible and the invisible is analogous to the articulation between the "is" and "is not" in metaphor (for what is the question of the visible/invisible if not the question of is/is not?). Metaphor, as such, makes its home in the nodal point between these poles. In *Lyric Philosophy* Zwicky establishes a tension between two opposing forces: "technology," which is synonymous with the urge to objectify the world through distinction, through tool use, through a totalized approach to the "is" of things, is opposed by Zwicky to the human capacity for "lyric" thought, which "springs from the desire to recapture the intuited wholeness of the non-linguistic world, to heal the slash in the mind that is the capacity for language" (L124). Zwicky acknowledges, however, that, no matter how tempting, it is as impossible to live in the ecstatic, desirous state of lyric wordlessness, as it is potentially destructive to live in the objectified, referential world of technology. Between these extremes, accepting the tensions of both, as a nodal point, we have "domesticity," which quite simply is both an acknowledgment of and respect for difference, for the orders of other things—domesticity uses without dominating (think of a warm winter coat, or a path through the woods) (L131, L136). In *Wisdom and Metaphor*, it is metaphor that occupies this domestic realm. The activity of seeing-as creates an ecology in its gestalt shifts between language-games; the distinctness of things is preserved and yet opened by changes in aspect revealed by analogical leaps between contexts. Metaphor is quite simply a house built by way of "articulation"; it is this same structural dynamic that is intrinsic to the archive.

Jan Zwicky's philosophical works are especially relevant to a discussion of archives and metaphor because of the formal lyric properties of her books. Both *Wisdom and Metaphor* and *Lyric Philosophy* pursue philosophy in open, resonant relation with an archive, in this case selections drawn from the history of philosophy, music, visual art, mathematics and poetry. On the left hand page Zwicky places her own text, which is quite often a response to or inflection of another author's text on the right hand page. The archive she creates is a personal archive not only of writings she admires or agrees with, but also with texts she takes positions against. While she explicitly states in the introductions to *Wisdom and Metaphor* and *Lyric Philosophy* that her intention is to suggest new readings of certain passages from Wittgenstein, as well as Freud and Herakleitos, her entire archive, all of the works that stand in relation to her own, enact the resonance and gestalt shifts that are central to her conception of metaphor and lyric philosophy. She notes in the forward to *Lyric Philosophy*: "The relation of the two texts to one another is somewhere between counterpoint and harmony, somewhere between a double helix and the allemande of the earth and moon" (x). Thus Zwicky enacts at once an engagement with the archive that is central to the project of philosophy as well as an engagement with the dynamic of metaphor that is central to thinking the articulated house of the archive, the non-systematic allowance for archive fever, for the "is" and "is not" that inhabits both the matter and time of things.

In light of the metaphoricity of archives and their intrinsic articulations of space and time, I turn now to the importance of archives to the project of ecocriticism. As an attempt to redress the historical "distortion" or "misreading" of the presence and importance of nature and natural conditions in the literary tradition, ecocriticism, one would think, is well positioned to engage the question of time and place as they relate to environmental ethics. However, as I argue, it is place rather than time that is more often the focus of ecocritical attention.

4. Ecocriticism as Archive

If the race of men were as old as the race of grebes, we might better grasp the import of his call. Think what traditions, prides, disdains, and wisdoms even a few self-conscious generations bring to us! What pride of continuity, then, impels this bird, who was a grebe eons before there was a man.

(Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*)

In his critique of the literary establishment's tendency to subordinate the natural circumstances of texts—the setting, the environmental details—Lawrence Buell, notes that "In 'good' writing, then, it would seem that the biota has only a bit part. If we map literary history from this angle of vision, we reinforce the impression that attentive representation of environmental detail is of minor importance even in writing where the environment figures importantly as an issue" (*EI* 85). Herein lies the impetus for Buell's ecocritical intervention into the literary archive. Ecocriticism *is* an archival project. It is not simply concerned with assembling an archive of neglected texts, but it also aims to inflect traditional approaches to the literary archive in general. By considering the work of Lawrence Buell, Leonard Scigaj, and briefly, David Mazel, I want to argue for the centrality of archival considerations in the critical practice of ecocriticism. Next I contend that the very historical foci of ecocritical inquiries themselves, in particular the specific works of nature writers like Henry David Thoreau and Aldo Leopold, are formally structured in an archival manner. Despite this interest in archives, however, I close this section by arguing that time is frequently subordinated to place in ecocritical inquires. It is this neglect of time that I propose to compensate for in my theory of lyric ethics in order to more fully appreciate the environmental ethics at stake in the poetry of McKay, Zwicky, and Graham.

In *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* Lawrence Buell, as the title suggests, spends considerable time tracing the development of ecocentric thinking in the American imagination. Buell is particularly interested in the figure of Henry David Thoreau as a critical touchstone in this environmentalist archive. He examines, for example, the significance of Thoreau's canonization in American letters. Buell wonders, in the context of the archive, "How does Thoreau's canonization shed light on the history, present state, and future potential of the environmental imagination as a literary and cultural force?" (312). Thoreau's writings are so influential that on the one hand, as Buell notes in reference to Auden's elegy for Yeats, Thoreau has "become his admirers," they have come to define him, and on the other hand the whole trajectory of early American environmental writing has come to be understood as emerging from Thoreau (422). In this way Thoreau is a vexed archival phenomenon; there is the man and his work, and there is the context of his intellectual reception and celebration. In other words, Thoreau exemplifies the metaphoricity of the nature writing archive inasmuch as he "is" and "is not" the tradition that he has come to represent. Indeed, as Buell emphasizes, there is a "myth of personality" that surrounds Thoreau and that encourages the popular conception of the man as an exemplary and exceptional life, which is not always consistent with details from Thoreau's life (373). Nature writing—the intellectual affiliations and trajectories of its practitioners—is not a stable, undisputed archive. Inasmuch as ecocriticism asks us to reassess the phenomenological interactions with the world of nature, of space, in literature, it also asks us to address the complexities of the archive of nature writing itself.

In his follow-up book, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and the Environment in the U.S. and Beyond*, Buell continues to interrogate the archive of nature writing by examining the work of such authors as Faulkner, Melville, Dreiser, Jeffers and others. Buell notes in his introduction to the book that "Environmental connectedness requires acts of imagination not at one stage but three: in the bonding, in the telling, in the understanding" (17). It is the archive of nature writing that underpins the environmental connectedness at issue here; it is the archive that focuses "the telling," that reflects "the bonding," and that is both the product of and impetus for "the understanding."

In *Mythologies* Roland Barthes offers another perspective on the degree to which nature demands of us an apprehension open to the complex dynamics of archives. He proposes that, historically, humanism has sought its explanations for human behaviour in a fundamentally immutable "human nature" that lies at the absolute base of history. It is the task of a "progressive humanism," according to Barthes, "to reverse the terms of this very old imposture, constantly to scour Nature, its 'laws' and its 'limits' in order to discover History there, and at last to establish Nature itself as historical" (Barthes 101). In response to this, critics like David Mazel in *American Literary Environmentalism* have undertaken studies that seek to approach the environment as "an idea rather than a presence" (19). Mazel examines the environment as it is constituted in officially sanctioned, government sponsored National Park Service interpretations, for example, in order to consider the political motivations that underlie the historical objectification of "nature."

Mazel's ecocriticism is self-consciously archival; he is engaged with that most inexorable of all archival imperatives: government. No less archivally inflected is the ecocritical work of Leonard Scigaj. Scigaj is important for my purposes because of his focused approach on environmental poetry in his book *Sustainable Poetry*. Without discussing archives explicitly, Scigaj implies a fundamental relationship between the notion of the archive and his version of an environmentally responsible poem—what he calls a "sustainable poem": "A sustainable poem is the verbal record of the percept, of the poet's originary perception. It is the verbal record of an interactive encounter in the world of our sensuous experience between the human psyche and nature, where nature retains its autonomy—where nature is not dominated, reduced to immanence, or reduced to a reliably benign aesthetic backdrop for anthropocentric concerns" (80). The "sustainable poem" archives the encounter between humans and the world, an encounter where the autonomy of nature is preserved, where its separate but equal status is maintained. It is worth noting here quickly that this "separate but equal" notion that Scigaj often refers to contrasts with the ethical encounter as conceived by Levinas where one always relates to the "other" in an asymmetrical relationship; the other is at once destitute and exalted—to claim equal status for the other would be to trap him or her in an objectified logic of the same. Nonetheless, the archival engagements inherent in the "sustainable poem" are clearly aimed at what Scigaj wants to understand as environmental ethics: "The texts of ecopoets are the historical records of their encounters with nature, of their embodied perceptions in the flesh of the visible, and constitute the record of their attempts to capture speech in order to promote a balance between the needs of humans and the health of earth's ecosystems" (274). Scigaj expresses explicitly here that ecopoetry is an archival project; however, his notion of "capturing speech" seems decidedly "un-wild," decidedly authoritarian in the context of archives, which contradicts the spirit of ecopoetry as he describes it in his work.

It is important to add that Scigaj not only addresses archival issues in his work, but he also examines writers, in this case poets, who raise the connection not simply between poetry and the archive but specifically between metaphor and the archive. Take Wendell Berry, for example, in his book *What Are People For?*, published in 1990, where he writes in archival terms about a bucket left out doors that fills with leaves and rain water and eventually collects growing layers of rich soil in its basin. Berry writes: "However small a landmark the old bucket is, it is not trivial…It collects stories, too, as they fall through time. It is irresistibly metaphorical" (154). It is important for our purposes here to underscore the intrinsic relationship that archives have with ecocriticism and the ultimate proximity of metaphorical thinking.

Notwithstanding ecocriticism's interest in the archive of nature writing, the works that are frequently the focus of ecocritical attention are often themselves structured formally in an archival manner. Consider Thoreau's *Walden* with its catalogue of seasonal variation and testament to the minutia of living. Amidst Thoreau's philosophical musings he offers seemingly banal records of his own finances: "My farm outgoes for the first season were, for implements, seed, work,

&c., $14 72½" (*Walden* 1747). We are made privy to everything from the progress of seven miles of beans planted in a field to the impressionistic quality of melt water rivulets in spring and the precise dates upon which ice left Walden Pond for the years of 1845 through to 1854 (*Walden* 1798, 1874, 1873). Similarly, Melville's *Moby Dick* is the archive not only of a hunting voyage, and of associated cetological knowledge, but it is also, as Lawrence Buell notes in a section devoted to the book, "the first canonical work of Anglophone literature to anatomize an extractive industry of global scope—an industry, furthermore, where American entrepreneurs had become the leading edge" (*WE* 205). This is the archive of Nantucket's economic imperialism. The archival structure of the book is emphasized even prior to its opening pages where Melville provides a long series of quotes from literary, religious, scientific, mythic, and folk sources that make reference, no matter how indirect, to whales.

Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* is central to the ecocritical canon. Like *Walden* and *Moby Dick*, *Sand County Almanac* is a book with an archival structure.[8] Leopold observes the passage of the seasons from his Wisconsin farm while offering observations that are at times both light-hearted and philosophically challenging. He pronounces himself an enemy of the American culture of materialistic consumption; thus his ostensibly comedic comments, for example, about the meadow mouse's proclivities for supply and demand economics is a critique of systematic economic models and their presumptive omniscience (4). The book has much of the spirit of *Walden* in its archival form; the details of Leopold's day to day habitation are recorded. There is a distinct interest, however, in an awareness of time, especially deep time evidenced by occasional reference to the glaciers that shaped this part of Wisconsin and that are responsible for the moraines and eskers that mark its unique topography, including the great deposits of sand that underlie his farm. In examining pollen grains embedded in peat he notes that "The record shows that the forest front at times retreated almost to Lake Superior; at times it advanced far to the south. At one period it advanced so far southward that spruce and other 'rear guard' species grew to and beyond the southern border of Wisconsin" (27).

Leopold approaches the natural world with the eye of an archivist, with an eye for what it says about time, about the plurality of times that have shaped his contemporary experience. The best example of the importance of archival thinking in his ecological pursuits comes in a section entitled "Good Oak." Here Leopold laments the disconnect that exists between the general public experience of food and heat and the actual source of their production. He implores the American citizen to plant a garden to fully appreciate the fact that food does not come from a grocery store. In the case of heat he calls upon people to split and burn their own wood. Leopold proceeds to describe his own experience cutting down a lightning-blasted oak near his farm. He deduces from the diameter of the tree and the number of growth rings that it must have germinated in 1865, at the close of the Civil War. In the act of sawing the tree down, Leopold experiences it as an archive:

> Fragrant little chips of history spewed from the saw cut, and accumulated on the snow before each kneeling sawyer. We sensed

> that these two piles of sawdust were something more than wood: that they were the integrated transect of a century; that our saw was biting its way, stroke by stroke, decade by decade, into the chronology of a lifetime, written in concentric annual rings of good oak. (9)

As the saw cuts deeper into the wood it moves backwards through time, striking at first the years of the farm's former proprietor, a disagreeable bootlegger, and moving back through the Great Depression, back to the time when Wisconsin lost its last cougar, back through droughts and passenger pigeons, back through the boasts in *American Sportsman* of the killing of six thousand ducks in one season, back finally to the Civil War and the settling of the question of "the man-man community," which prompts Leopold to wonder when the "man-land community" will be considered (15).

An interest in history, in considering the archival possibilities of landscapes and natural phenomena is abundant in Leopold's writing and it comes to inform Buell's notion of "place" and its ultimate dependence on history. Buell observes that our readings of environmental texts invariably involve our accumulated life experiences of physical environments. He goes on to point out that "acts of writing and reading will likely involve simultaneous processes of environmental awakening—retrievals of physical environment from dormancy to salience—and of distortion, repression, forgetting, inattention" (*WE* 18). These notions of retrieval, dormancy and selectivity are similarly integral to the question of archives. Moreover, as some theorists of metaphor point out, these notions are also implicated in the function of metaphors. Max Black, for example, in his influential study of metaphor proposes that the "man is a wolf" metaphor "suppresses some details, emphasizes others—in short, *organizes* our view of man" (75). In this way a metaphor, as I discussed in the previous section, is a kind of archive.[9]

Despite the importance of the archive to ecocriticism and to the formal structure of prominent works of nature writing, there remains an emphasis on place over time among ecocritics. Consider, for example, the numerous articles in the ever expanding catalogue of environmentally focused anthologies that emphasize the importance of place to ecocritical investigations.[10] Indeed, temporality is frequently considered in overly reductive terms while place is discussed in all of its myriad complexities. In the second chapter of *Writing for an Endangered World*, for example, Lawrence Buell devotes himself to the question of "place," remarking that "'Place' is if anything more elusive than its sibling 'time'" (59). Time, he argues, is a less vexing issue because it often involves measurements against "an objective standard," as in the case of time zones (59). Despite his allowance for the importance of history to one's dwelling in any given place, and here Buell calls upon Thoreau and Wordsworth as exponents of the importance of our childhood attachment to place, time remains a secondary concern. Indeed, Buell goes so far as to rename Wordsworth's "spots of time" as "moments of place" (70). While there is no denying the importance of the specificity of place in a Wordsworth poem like "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798," it is equally difficult to disregard the importance of time emphasized by the date and the "revisit" in this work. Moreover, "Tintern

Abbey" is arguably more of a meditation on the importance of holding in tension temporal pluralities as a condition for meaningful reflection than it is a celebration of any single place. In many respects the poem spends little time in its contemporary surroundings, focusing instead on the "glad animal movements" of youth and on the future "after years / …when thy mind / Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, / Thy memory be as a dwelling-place" (Wordsworth 109, 111). Buell does not ignore history, but he does not challenge assumptions about time and the degree to which they inflect potentially ethical responses to the world, preferring instead to locate the dilemma of environmentalism in primarily spatial terms.

The closest Leonard Scigaj comes to considering the complexity of temporality to questions of environmental ethics is in his concept of *référance* in his book *Sustainable Poetry*. *Référance* (as I explained in more detail in Chapter One) leads the reader's attention towards the world of nature and away from the language of the poem. In marking this difference between the referential world and the linguistic world, *référance* "does not lead to continual delay or infinitely disseminating textual meaning," unlike the consequences of difference (or *différance*), according to Scigaj, in Derridean philosophy (51). Moreover, the ecopoet employing *référance* "is engaged in an act of reading nature; the armchair Derridean critic or postmodern reader is actually overhearing and rereading a reading and should pay some attention to the original reading" (51). There are two problematic points about time presented here. One is that the reading of nature by the artist is more authentic because of its precedence. The implication here is that the reader of nature has more access to the truth of nature given his or her proximity to nature in time. This idea is insufficient, however, if we consider an approach to the natural world through the context of deep time, where it is precisely the radical otherness of natural time—its ineffability—that one faces. Undoubtedly, Scigaj's aim is to encourage critics to put on their boots and go outside (that is, arrive at and attend to a "place"); however, the temporal demands the world makes on us, in light of the complexities of deep time, are more omnipresent and require far more than faith in the representational efficacy of a poem. The second point Scigaj suggests about time is that *référance* leads us to the world which presents itself as a temporally stable situation where there is no continual "delay" or "deferral." This it seems to me is completely at odds with an approach to the natural world that is attentive to the complexities of time. Scigaj is reinforcing the notion that the natural world is more vexingly an issue of place rather than time, where what is required is to get all the critics to go outside—their expectations of "delays" and "deferrals" will be subverted in an original experience of nature, one that is temporally stable. Is this not a kind of systematic atomism, a kind of linguistic thinking about time inasmuch as it posits a potentially Newtonian temporality of consistent order? It is precisely this placid conception of time in ecopoetry and ecocriticism that I wish to contest.

As I have been arguing, ecocriticism is an archival enterprise and as such it is interested in history. My contention here is that this interest in history does not translate to an interest in how we think about temporality itself, or how we consider the notion of other times beyond our own human frames of reference. While critics like William Cronon ("The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature") charge that an imaginative response to wilderness often results in a "flight from history," (79-80) and while many ecocritics have dutifully engaged the archive of nature writing and the archive of the literary canon to argue for an historical concern with nature and natural conditions in texts, the question of time, as something as conceptually problematic as place, has not been addressed. Even where time and temporality have been interrogated in more detail it has often been to employ time in the service of "place." David Abram in his essay "Out of the Map, into the Territory: The Earthly Topology of Time" exemplifies this inasmuch as his lengthy discussion of temporality culminates with an argument for the way in which "'time' may be felt to metamorphose into what we call 'space'" (97). It is the present as *presence*, as spatial experience that is the focus of his attention.

I do not wish to minimize the importance of space. Indeed, I have spent the first half of this project describing the importance of lyrical apprehensions of materiality. I turn in this chapter to the question of time not only because it is unconsidered in ecocriticism but also because it is intrinsic to questions of ethics, as Levinas demonstrates, and to questions of ontology, as Heidegger demonstrates. In addition, nature, as an archive, as an expression of deep time, of distinctly nonhuman temporality, requires metaphorical apprehension. However, as Zwicky observes, we have difficulty "seeing" time "as" without distortion. Our "idea" of time (that is, of Newtonian, successive, systematic time) is, in effect, objectified, frozen; it is the product of "resonance-insensitive" thought (*WM* L72). Similarly, nature, I argue, is readily conceived and expressed in the language of reference, the language of space, but it is not readily approached through the dimension of time. In short, our problem with expressing time linguistically has the same form as our problem with approaching nature temporally. This is the crux of environmental ethics. Canadian poet Don McKay observes the conceptual consequences of this in his essay "Otherwise than Place," which is about the distinction between place and wilderness; he argues that thinking otherwise than place is thinking geologic time, it is thinking oblivion. This, of course, is not a sustainable avenue of thought; hence our tendency, McKay proposes, to "domesticate" the temporal wilderness through the establishment of place built on memory and story, built, as it were, on an archive.

5. Time and Ethics

What then is time? I know what it is if no one asks me what it is; but if I want to explain it to someone who has asked me, I find that I do not know.

(St. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*)

It is interesting that in many mythologies, Time is a god: but never Space.

(Jan Zwicky, *Wisdom and Metaphor*)

Metaphor is not only intimately involved with our attempts to understand time, but it is also a function of our responsible experience of time. Lyric time is the apprehension of temporality in light of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. Lyric time is apprehended only through metaphorical thinking; it is not reducible to the objectified dimensions of Newtonian time. This is not to say that we "understand" lyric time as such, rather it is the case that we are in relation to it through metaphoricity. When we approach the natural world as an archive, as an articulation of temporal pluralities, we are apprehending it in the terms of metaphoricity, in the terms of lyric time. Archives require us to reckon with the relationship between a multiplicity of times and spaces. There is, therefore, an inherent proximity between thinking time and thinking matter or being. I begin this section by selectively examining Martin Heidegger's book *Being and Time* in order to illuminate what I call his conception of "archival being." Heidegger is important for my purposes because he attempts to understand time in a way that embodies it, but that also avoids atomistic renderings: if we are to think of the time of a birch tree then we need to think matter and time together. Time is intrinsic to being for Heidegger; however, temporality does not present itself in a linear fashion. Rather time has an ecstatic relationship to being; the past, the present, and the future are all ecologically involved with each other. It is this relationship between temporal pluralities that underscores the metaphoricity of the archival structure of being. However, Heidegger's approach to time is problematic because it grounds temporal experience in "Da-sein" in a single, un-relational entity. Heidegger essentially closes time into the individual, materializing it, spatializing it in a teleological world of self-referentiality. Levinas, on the other hand, offers us a different way to think of time. He allows us to think of time as articulation, as relation, as an ecology among temporal pluralities beyond the self. More importantly, I ague, Levinas allows us to think of the ethical imperative of "deep time" because of his interest in the relationship between an immemorial past and an infinite future. Despite Zwicky's claim that we cannot "see" time "as," metaphor, bringing time into play without presupposing the idea of time, allows an ethical relation with things where time remains different, where it is approached without being understood. What is the time of a birch tree? It is a different time. It is a time only apprehensible, in terms of its relational dynamic, by way of a relation of metaphoricity. It is a time we face when we are open to the natural world as an archive—an archive reaching forward and backwards, around us and away from us with its many-handed clocks.

(i) Heidegger and Archival Being

What is time? What *is* it? The ontological presuppositions of this question are indicative of a reflex that has possessed Western conceptions of temporality from its earliest origins: time is understood in terms of space. From the Herakleitean interest in the dynamism of nature in an ordered world, to the Aristotelian notion that time is the measure of motion, to the Augustinian view that time is composed of a chain of discrete presents, the recourse to spatial conceptions of temporality is omnipresent.[11] Indeed, for Martin Heidegger, time is intrinsically involved with the very space of our lives. It is in light of temporally structured experiences of the world that we develop ways of thinking of things. Moreover, it is the capacity to direct one's life according to a vision of the future that affects how we see the past and the present, and how we interact with the space of our material environment. Being is archival for Heidegger inasmuch as it involves a constant reckoning with the different times of one's life in accordance with the future that one has in mind. It involves an articulatory relationship with a plurality of times.

The locus for this archival relationship between time and the question of being is Da-sein. Da-sein, or *there-being*, is the condition of a being for whom its own being is an issue; Da-sein's relationship to the world is a going concern. Early in *Being and Time* Heidegger states that "The meaning of the being of that being we call Da-sein proves to be *temporality*" (15). Heidegger goes on to argue in the book that Da-sein's being is not corpuscular, it is not simply an objective presence that discretely exists in a world of other separate beings and objects. Rather, Da-sein's being is being-in-the-world; beings find themselves in relationships that fundamentally connect them to a context of being, an ecology of interaction. Not only is this the case for one's physical embodiment in the world, but it is also the case for one's relationship to time. As Stephen Mulhall argues, "Heidegger's idea is not that human beings necessarily exist *in* time, but rather that they exist as temporality, that human existence most fundamentally *is* temporality…. [This also goes for the dimensions themselves] In other words, temporality does not consist of three logically or metaphysically distinct dimensions or elements, but is an essentially integral phenomenon" (145-146). The "ecstatic unity of temporality," as Heidegger calls it, is a threefold relationship between the past, the present and the future (*BT* 321). Each dimension can be itself only inasmuch as it is already involved with other dimensions: "The future is *not later* than the having-been, and the having-been is *not* *earlier* than the present. Temporality temporalizes itself as a future that makes present, in the process of having-been" (321).

Humans "inauthentically"[12] historicize themselves when they see a single, self-contained identity moving through a sequential series of temporal events. Da-sein, for Heidegger, "does not exist as the sum of the momentary realities of experiences that succeed each other and disappear" (*BT* 343). Da-sein's being is constituted by a "stretching along" as opposed to an atomism of separate moments. In his book *The Human Experience of Time* Charles Sherover offers an example of Heidegger's conception of temporal synthesis through an imagined car trip:

> Into this situation, I bring my *relevant* past, my knowledge of how to drive or to choose the route; other aspects of my past are left in 'inventory', unnoticed and almost deliberately forgotten....What I *notice* as I am driving are those landscape features that somehow have bearing on this future of 'getting to my destination and what I anticipate doing after I get there'....the perceptual content of my journey is structured, somehow, by the 'ecstatical' (or 'standing-out') nature that this particular synthesis of future-and-thereby-selected-past somehow picks out for me to see. (456-7)

When I propose that Heidegger's conception of being is archival, it is with this ecological "stretching along" and interaction in mind. Being is always a temporal relationship, an articulated unity founded in the ecstatic threefold of time. Being is archival inasmuch as it involves different times together as a function of existing, as a function of being aware of one's authentic existence. To historicize an object authentically—that is, to avoid the "vulgar" interpretation of history that is the atomistic, corpuscular view of things (the past as past)—is to see history as "a 'connection' of events and 'effects' (explainable in the context of a vision of the future) that moves through the 'past,' the 'present' and the 'future'" without giving the past any particular priority (347). Historical objects bound to a past-Da-sein cannot be past in an objective sense because Da-sein is still present, Da-sein keeps going and these objects are part of Da-sein's world: "The antiquities still objectively present have a 'past' and a character of history because they belong to useful things and originate from a world that has-been—the world of a Da-sein that has-been-there" (349. The consequence of this idea, as Heidegger points out, is that "Da-sein is what is primarily historical" (349).

Given that things in the world have a history by virtue of their attachment to Da-sein, we must acknowledge a certain anthropocentrism to Heidegger's archival approach to existence. As he points out, "Remains, monuments, and records that are still objectively present are *possible* 'material' for the concrete disclosure of Da-sein that has-been-there. These things *can* become *historiographical* material only because they have a *world-historical* character in accordance with their own kind of being" (359). First there is the world view, then the archive is made to fit in; that is, the material of history is interpreted in light of the world view. Moreover, Heidegger adds that "even nature is historical. It is *not* historical when we speak about 'natural history,' but nature is historical as a countryside, as areas that have been inhabited or exploited, as battlefields and cultic sites" (355). Nature here, like the above antiquities, is archival inasmuch as it is articulated to the being-in-the-world that is Da-sein.

Despite the articulation between temporal pluralities operative in Heidegger's conception of archival being, time, for Heidegger, is inescapably human time. In fact, the whole emphasis of *Being and Time* is on the way in which an individual structures a world in light of his or her interpretive outlook, in light of his or her hopes and fears about the future. Indeed, "authenticity" itself is about structuring one's life in pursuit of a specific view of the future. The future, therefore, for all of its fluid unknowability, remains a firmly anthropocentric construction inasmuch as it is about one person's time and one person's view of the world. Heidegger's inflection of the term "ontology" itself reflects his emphasis on specific human time versus the time of things in the world more generally. Charles Sherover remarks that "Heidegger's use of the term [ontology] is, then, deliberately post-Kantian; as 'internalized', it thus means the being-structure of *my* interpretive outlook in terms of which *I* construct *my* 'picture' of *my* world" (460). In contrast to this "solitary" time of the individual, Levinas posits a view of temporality that is fundamentally relational in an articulatory manner. For Levinas time is not reducible to a being, in fact time has a meaning of its own. Moreover, as I discuss below, Levinas allows us to think of the ethical imperative of "deep time" because of his interest in the relationship between an immemorial past and an infinite future.

(ii) Levinas and the Archive of Deep Time

Levinas allows us to think of a plurality of other times, of the otherness of time. At the core of his notion of temporality is a relational dynamic. In fact, one cannot have time as such without being in a relationship with something more than oneself: "time is not the achievement of an isolated and lone subject, but…is the very relationship of the subject with the other" (*TO* 39). This approach to time is an example of what I mean by lyric time, it expresses the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. Levinas is important for my discussion of lyric time for three principal reasons. First, his work underscores the "temporal metaphoricity" inherent in our relationship to time. To have time in the first place is to already be in an articulatory relationship with another time. Specifically, Levinas's approach to the future and to the past underscores the degree to which the unknowable future and immemorial past make possible the experience of time in the first place. Second, the face to face encounter is an archival encounter. As such it leads us to an apprehension of the "trace" of the other, which is a temporal as well as a material trace; it is an example of the metaphoricity inherent in one's relationship to the time and space of the other. Third, our responsibility for the other has its roots in the immemorial past, in a past prior to comprehension. In light of this, I propose that responsibility comes from what we might call an archival relationship to deep time, to the deep time of the other. While Levinas's view of time is, like Heidegger's, rooted in human relations, the degree to which time involves relationships with other bodies and with the unknowable and immemorial presupposes the possibility that we may think of time here as a relationship with the different times of the nonhuman; indeed, the different times of the elemental earth itself.

Levinas underscores the temporal metaphoricity inherent in our relationship with time through his contention that time is constituted by social relations, rather than by the interests and projections of a sole individual (as is the case for Heidegger). Levinas asks in his book *Existence and Existents*: "Is not sociality something more than the source of our representation of time: is it not time itself?" (93). Prior to its relationship with another, a being, for Levinas, has no time, only an inert present. Just as the materiality of the subject is opened by the intervention of the other, so too is temporality realized through the genuine novelty introduced by the other. Robert John Sheffler Manning argues in his book *Interpreting Otherwise than Heidegger* that for Levinas "Only the other can bring something more than the subject's present, can bring a genuinely new moment, can bring time in its full sense" (66). Thus, to have time is to be in relationship to another time—a time that escapes full comprehension. The other has a different future. Indeed, as Levinas points out, "The other is the future. The very relationship with the other is the relationship with the future" (*TO* 77). Given that the future, as otherness, as mystery, as surprise, is unknowable, time expresses the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity inasmuch as one's own time is constituted by the time of another, it is in fact the articulation between the different times—its sociality—that is temporality itself. This is an example of temporal metaphoricity; time is the articulation between different contexts of temporality. Moreover, this dynamic is also expressed in terms of the past in the face to face encounter. The other opens time back to an immemorial past that precedes any conception of the other's origins. As in the case of the future, the past is not the past of a lone subject but a past apprehended in relation to the other. Alphonso Lingis points out that "Levinas's bold thesis is that the relationship with alterity is the original case of this affliction of the present of consciousness with a past that it cannot render present, represent" (xxvi). The ecology of different times that is expressed in the relational dynamic of the encounter with the other is an example of the operative dynamic of lyric time, it is an example of temporal metaphoricity.

Because the other faces me with a novel and infinite future as well as an immemorial past, the face to face encounter can be conceived of as an archival encounter. The archive of the other is a metaphorical structure inasmuch as the other affects me but the meaning of his or her future and the meaning of his or her origins are not reducible to logical explanation. The time of the other "is" and yet "is not" accessible. What is in fact apprehended is the "trace" of the other. I focus here on Levinas's notion of the "trace" because it is an example of temporal as well as material metaphoricity. Levinas describes the trace variously as the mark of an absence, as "the fingerprints left by a criminal, the tracks of an animal, the vestiges of ancient civilizations" (Robbins "Tracing" 177). In *Otherwise than Being* the trace "tends and distends the infinite, the non-original and anarchic as well as infinite, which no present, no historiography, could assemble, and whose passing precedes every memorable past" (93). The trace is an example of metaphoricity in both its material and temporal senses. It is the mark of a past that has never been present inasmuch as it is a past that has never been "present" to consciousness in both a temporal and physical manner. The past of the other is other; it has not been part of my experience of physical history, nor has it been made present to my consciousness in the form of any logical understanding. Jill Robbins asks in "Tracing Responsibility": "What are the consequences of thinking responsibility to the other as a relation to the trace? First, the other to whom I am responsible cannot be said to *be there* [in time or space]. The trace by which the face of the other signifies is outside the presence-and-absence dyad" (178). In this way the archival encounter of the face to face demands responsibility to the different times of the other. Consequently, I would argue, the trace of the other presents itself as an imperative through the archival encounter of the face to face by way of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity, both materially and temporally. The dynamic of metaphoricity, as I have been explaining throughout this project, does not participate in the strict economy of presence and absence; rather its articulatory dynamic makes it ecologically part of both possibilities—it traces the hinge between them, so to speak.

For Levinas our responsibility to the other has its roots in the immemorial past, in a past prior to comprehension. In light of this, I propose that responsibility comes from what we might call an archival relationship to "deep time," to the deep time of the other. The fact that the time of the other is never present, but only reveals itself as a trace, is suggestive of what deep time reveals of geophysical and natural history. We have only the trace of the past in the fossil records as absences that were never present to us as living things. Levinas describes the past of the other in terms that evoke deep time: "It was made in an irrecuperable time which the present, represented in recall, does not equal, in a time of birth or creation, of which nature or creation retains a trace, unconvertible into a memory" (*OB* 104-5). Similarly, in his essay "Meaning and Sense," Levinas adds that "The face is in the trace of the utterly bygone, utterly past Absent, withdrawn into what Paul Valéry calls 'the deep yore, never long ago enough'" (60). Deep time is the unknowable past of the earth inasmuch as it is ultimately inaccessible to empirical study—the palaeontologist's subject matter has long since ceased to exist (one cannot be certain even of its existence as such). Indeed, as Stephen Jay Gould notes, "In one way it is regrettable that palaeontologists are always posted to scientific departments. They ought to be part of history departments. A lot of our work is much closer to the historian's than the physicist's" (Gould "Time Scales" 33). Consequently, In light of Levinas's characterization of the trace, I propose that we think of deep time as the unfathomable past of the other.

It is from the unknowable past, the trace of the other, that Levinas says our responsibility for the other emerges. We feel responsible before we even know why: "There is a paradox in responsibility, in that I am obliged without this obligation having begun in me, as though an order slipped into my consciousness like a thief, smuggled itself in" (*OB* 13). Therefore, I propose that responsibility has its root in an attentiveness to the archival structure of things in such a way that one is open to the deep time of the other, its irreducible past and future. This attentiveness is an apprehension of lyric time, of the temporal metaphoricity of the other. While it is important to acknowledge that Levinas's view of time is, like Heidegger's, rooted in human relations, the degree to which time involves relationships with other bodies and with the unknowable and immemorial presupposes the possibility that we may think of time here as extra-human, as a relationship with the different times of what is not human (after all, such time escapes the limits of human consciousness). Particularly, Levinas's interest in the immemorial time of the other suggests a potential consideration of the earthly elemental (especially rock) where the question of ancient or unknowable time is most clearly pronounced. As Robert John Sheffler Manning notes, "Time is the surplus of meaning that overflows human comprehension because time itself is the relationship with what cannot be assimilated by experience" (87). An apprehension of things that is attentive to temporal metaphoricity is an openness to lyric time, to the times that interrupt our own notions of the order of the world by the very fact that we cannot assimilate them to our experience. Such is the issue we face when we ask the time of a birch tree.

(iii) Zwicky and the Meaning of Time

But if we cannot, as Zwicky claims, "see" time "as," then how are we to make sense of the different time of the birch tree by adopting a metaphorical approach? According to Zwicky, time reveals itself in language-dependent thinking, as hypostatization in secondary process. That is, time functions for Zwicky as that which makes distinctions between things possible—it provides a grammar so to speak. Pure lyric thought on the other hand has no temporal organization (*LP* L201). Metaphor, however, domesticates pure lyric thought, it expresses it as an articulation to time:

> Lyric comprehension conditioned by temporal awareness becomes domestic [in other words, metaphor]. The more brilliant the lyric resolution, the more weight it will set in the balance against time, the more we may feel ourselves to be aware of something we might gesture towards with the words 'time itself'. (Mortality.) To balance is not to oppose. At least it is not wholly to oppose. (*LP* L201)

In other words, time is not understood by metaphor but it is brought into relation. Metaphor articulates the timelessness of lyric and *this*ness to the time-fullness of language-dependent thinking. It is important that time has no meaning as such. In this way it foregrounds its relational dynamic before any leap to meaning. Metaphor brings us into a relational experience of time. As Zwicky notes: "It is possible to experience the relation between spatially-inflected and temporally-inflected forms of thought. This is what happens when we think about metaphor" (*WM* L74). In light of my discussion of Levinas I wish to add to this and suggest that it is not a single experience of time that we are presented with in metaphor. Rather, it is the possibilities of other times, an ecology of times. If lyric ethics is expressed in the face to face relationship, then, as a function of this, an articulatory relationship with the immemorial past and the unknowable future is also expressed. If time has no meaning as such, then its otherness can only be approached by standing in relation to these different times. Metaphor, by bringing time into play without presupposing the idea of time, allows an ethical relation with things where time remains different, where it is approached without being understood; however, the trace of other times affects us. What is the time of a birch tree? It is a different time. It is a time only apprehensible, in terms of its relational dynamic, by way of a relation of metaphoricity.

(iv) Lyric Ethics, Lyric Time

What it all boils down to is this: lyric ethics engages the question of time (the question that is not asked by ecocritics) through the apprehension of lyric time and its dynamic of temporal metaphoricity. While the meaning of the other times of things escapes us, it is through metaphor that we can apprehend time without sealing it into a totalized concept. Time is involved in metaphor as the trace of the other, as that part of metaphor that always escapes our attempts at analytic explanation or literal translation. There are already examples, as I have discussed in this chapter, of how we approach the question of time lyrically as a way of standing in relation to it without concluding it; we do so in our approach to the question of deep time and in how we think the dynamic and structure of archives. Consequently, as a way of extending lyric ethics to encounters with the natural world, let us think of the face to face encounter with the nonhuman as an archival encounter with the deep time of the other, its unknowable temporality. As a function of my responsibility to the other, this deep time is involved with my own time, constituting a temporal ecology, a temporal metaphoricity that opens my sense of my own time to much more distant horizons beyond my immediate goals and aims. This is the ethical potential of lyric time. In the next chapter I examine how the poetry of McKay, Graham, and Zwicky enacts an archival approach to the elemental, to that material aspect of the natural world that most insists on considerations of time. Lyric ethics, after all, involves the apprehension of things in light of the dynamics of metaphoricity in both spatial and temporal terms.

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[1] In *Basin and Range* John McPhee remarks that the slow rate of geological processes requires "time in quantities no mind has yet conceived"; he calls this quantity of time "deep time" (104). Indeed, he goes on to speculate that "The human mind may not have evolved enough to be able to comprehend deep time" (127). McPhee's approach to the question of deep time is interesting for my purposes because his writings frequently employ imaginative meditations. *Basin and Range*, for example, is a book that traces an imagined journey through time along Interstate 80 in the United States. McPhee dramatizes the different landscapes one would encounter at different moments in geological history. His approach to deep time is lyrical inasmuch as his recourse to explanation is through metaphorical travel.

[2] As will become clear through my discussion, I mean lyric time in terms of the temporality of metaphoricity. Jan Zwicky discusses the time of lyric in her work as timelessness. I do not mean lyric time in this way. Rather, my notion of lyric is connected to lyric art, specifically the operative dynamic of metaphoricity. I draw attention to this now to avoid confusion between my use of the term lyric time and Zwicky's conception of the temporality of lyric. In addition, it is the emphasis on the metaphoricity of temporality in lyric that distinguishes my notion of lyric time from that examined in Sharon Cameron's book *Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre*. There are points in Cameron's discussion which are consistent with my understanding of lyric temporality, in particular the tension she describes between a plurality of times: "For the lyric records loss while not feeling obliged to register it as final; the poem totalizes itself and understands by its totalization the continued presence of all its phenomenal aspects, whatever their temporal priorities" (258). However, Cameron's larger interest is in the way that lyric (particularly in the contexts of the poems she discusses) is the locus of temporal stasis. She points out in the Introduction that "In the following pages we shall observe the ways in which lyric poems attempt such a stasis, as they slow temporal advance to the difficult still point of meaning" (25). Conversely, in my exploration of lyric time, temporal metaphoricity is neither still (it is a relational dynamic) nor is its meaning a single point (it is, rather, a resonant hinge).

[3] Paul Davies discuses the rigidity of Newtonian time in his book *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution*: "Newton's time had endured for two centuries and was scarcely questioned by Westerners, though it has always rested uneasily alongside Eastern thought, and is alien to the minds of indigenous peoples in America, Africa, and Australia....Among other things, Newton's concept of time invites us to chop it up into past, present and future in an absolute and universal manner." (32). It is precisely this atomistic rendering of temporality that is contested by lyric time.

[4] The frontispiece to Thomas Burnett's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* depicts a Christ figure standing atop a cycle of globes. Clockwise, these globes represent the different states of the earth as it progresses through time. At the bottom of the circle is the present, fallen earth. Back in time and forward in time on either side of the present earth are manifestations of the earth that mirror each other. Flat featureless globes, and chaotic imperiled globes face each other on opposite sides of the circle, from both the past and the future.

[5] This is curiously reminiscent, I would suggest, of Wittgenstein's Seventh Proposition in the *Tractatus* ("What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" [74]); for Hutton the question of origins and historical trajectories are not reducible to the Newtonian logic to which he so desperately wanted to reduce time.

[6] In "Derrida, Foucault, and the Archiviolothics of History," Michael O'Driscoll argues against considerations of the archive that are "purely figural" (284). O'Driscoll's objection is that "to reduce

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the material status of the archive to a pure figurality not only conceals the very concealment of power...but also effectively disavows any possible resistance to that power" (288). I am not, however, advocating that we apprehend the archive as a single, totalized metaphor (that is to say, as a map, or a tree, or a labyrinth—all examples that O'Driscoll rightly takes up as limited approaches); rather, I would propose that to apprehend the archive as an expression of metaphoricity is to be responsible to its simultaneous relationship with both the literal and the figurative—and the articulatory dynamic between them—or, in the terms of O'Driscoll's essay, the "site" or matter of the archive, and the "cite" or process of its management. I would argue that O'Driscoll's interest in emphasizing the "s/citation" of the archive is in keeping with what I take to be the metaphoricity of the archive—the literal fixity of the "object" is always cast in terms of the contingencies of its contexts, its material, ideological, and historical environments.

It is not my intention that the metaphoricity of the archive be understood as a flight from the specific, material details of archival process; rather, I wish to claim that an archival encounter with nature, for example, in the terms that I have described (see Chapter Five for a more complete discussion of the "archival encounter"), is attentive to the temporal plurality of the physical environment in a way that is responsible both to the non-discrete materiality of things and to the way in which they are constituted through the encounter as "lyric matter" in "lyric time." Thus, the archival encounter (by way of the situation and citation of the relational dynamic of metaphoricity) implicates one in being responsible to the other, to the other that is in *this* place, in *this* time (and as such also compels one to face the *this*ness and deep time of the other).

[7] This temporal and material metaphoricity of the "spectre" is also implied in Derrida's treatment of the term in *Specters of Marx*. A spectral moment, as Derrida understands it, does not belong to a singular time of "modalized presents" where the past, present, and future are discrete "now's" (xx). The times of the spectre are plural, they undo any opposition established in a distinct and linear succession from past to future (39-40). The temporality of the spectre is thus an articulatory dynamic, hinged *between* times. Similarly, the materiality of the spectre is such that it is in a paradoxical state of being "non-present present" (6). To face the question of the materiality of the spectre is to face the question of the "hauntological," that which haunts the ontological Being of beings (51, 161). This ghost that haunts matter (that makes it lyrical, we might say), is also an expression of metaphoricity itself. Derrida notes that "the figure of the ghost is not just one figure among others. It is perhaps the hidden figure of all figures" (120). This is how I have been arguing that metaphoricity functions—it is not *a* metaphor, but the operative dynamic of all figures themselves.

[8] There are, of course, other important books dealing with natural history and environmentalism that could fit into this category. Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* is one such example; it has an archival structure and is also highly lyrical in its writing. Dillard's description of an August meteor shower is extraordinary:

> In the great meteor shower of August, the Perseid, I wail all day for the shooting stars I miss. They're out there showering down, committing hara-kiri in a flame of fatal attraction, and hissing perhaps at last into the ocean. But at dawn what looks like a blue dome clamps down over me like the lid of a pot. The stars and planets could smash and I'd never know. Only a piece of ashen moon occasionally climbs up or down the inside of the dome, and our local star without surcease explodes on our heads. (22-23)

I focus on Aldo Leopold here, however, because his archival approach is more directly in keeping with what I want to emphasize about temporal metaphoricity. Moreover, it could be argued that Leopold makes possible later approaches such as Dillard's. Leopold is, as Buell notes in *Writing for an Endangered World*, "the man known today as the father of modern environmental ethics" (183).

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[9] A metaphor is the archive of the non-linguistic in language. That is, the record of the gesture to express non-linguistic thought is expressed in metaphor. In this way, metaphors inhabit our language as archival evidence of attempts to get outside of language.

[10] There are many examples of ecocritical attention to place in (to name but two prominent collections) *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory and the Environment*, edited by Steven Rosendale; and *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. For a particularly illuminating and lyrical examination of place see Laurie Ricou's *The Arbutus/Madrone Files: Reading the Pacific Northwest*. Ricou's approach to the environment of the Pacific Northwest enacts metaphoricity inasmuch as it is attentive to the area as one bioregion split between two countries, and two different ways of naming the same tree (arbutus and madrone). This relational dynamic is emphasized in Ricou's explanation of the book's title: "The slash separating and joining Arbutus and Madrone figures the artificial/real border that contributes to the region's doubleness and fluidity. It allows for either/or, and for a *both* that is a uniquely interdependent fusion" (1).

[11] See Charles M. Sherover, *The Human Experience of Time: The Development of Its Philosophic Meaning* for a more detailed discussion of the recourse to spatial conceptions of time in early Western theories of temporality. Particularly: 3, 20-21, 38.

[12] Da-sein's existence is inauthentic when its own being does not present itself to itself as an issue, but is rather directed by the "public" world of the "they." In *Being and Time* Heidegger spends considerable time talking about how Da-sein's being is inherently inauthentic because the context for thinking itself is continually provided by the "they"; he notes that "[i]n its being, the they is essentially concerned with averageness" (119). He adds that "averageness, and levelling down, as ways of being of the they, constitute what we know as 'publicness.'…Publicness obscures everything, and then claims that what has been thus covered over is what is familiar and accessible to everybody" (119). The they is a kind of "consensual hallucination," or an unconscious directive that prevents one from achieving genuine self-reflection and consequently prevents one from living an authentic life (Mulhall 69). Through his discussion of inauthenticity as "falling prey" (164), Heidegger depicts Da-sein's achievement of authenticity as a response to a summons, a summons that rescues Da-sein from the clutches of idle talk, fear, and ambiguity. The call comes from Da-sein itself: "And what is called forth by the summons is Da-sein, out of falling prey to the they….The call of conscience itself, has its ontological possibility in the fact that Da-sein is care in the ground of its being" (256). The call of conscience is the call of care according to Heidegger and it emerges from within Da-sein as the fulfillment of one's own potential.

5. ARCHIVISTS OF THE ELEMENTAL: Zwicky, McKay, and Graham[1]

Darwin said that our fossil archives are like a library of which only a few pages, a few words, a few letters, have survived. It's a striking image, don't you think?

(Stephen Jay Gould, *Conversations about the End of Time*)

I see, my dear Theaetetus, that Theodorus had a true insight into your nature when he said that you were a philosopher, for wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder.

(Socrates, in the Platonic dialogue *Theaetetus*)

1. The Times of Things: Où sont les Neiges d'Antan?

Driving west of Edmonton the relatively open mix of grass and poplars in the aspen parkland begins to give way to the straight and stark lodgepole pine and black spruce of the western boreal forest. Slowly the topography changes; the foothills begin to rise around you. By the time you are in Hinton the towering façades of the barrier range of the Rocky Mountains loom before you. Just inside the Jasper National Park gate, you can detour up a twisting road to find the Miette hot springs. There, at an elevation of almost two kilometers above the ocean, you can find fossils of ancient sea creatures as the cracked and hardened bed of an old saltwater sea is thrust skyward around you at dizzying angles.

This past summer I turned thirty. While in Ontario for a brief visit I accompanied some amateur astronomers to a barren outcropping on the Canadian Shield to have a look at the stars through different telescopes. As I looked at the star Arcturus, I learned that it takes thirty years for light to travel from the star to the earth; I was looking at how Arcturus looked the very year—possibly the very moment—that I was born. How are we to stand in relation to such scales of time? How does lyric art, such as poetry, express a relationship to the temporality of such vexing distances? What is missing from ecocritical investigations into the environmental ethics of literary texts, as I argued extensively in the last chapter, is a sufficient engagement with the complexities of temporality expressed in poems about the natural world. It is this oversight that I wish to correct in my examination of three poets whose work, as a function of being an example of lyric ethics, is also an exemplary expression of engagements with lyric time.

All perception is affected by time. We do not notice this when the objects of the world are at hand. However, the night sky glimpsed through a telescope reminds us that light takes time to arrive. Of all the matter of the physical environment the question of time is most clearly pronounced in the elemental, in the starlight, in the bedrock, in the ocean, in the weather. It is these materials that most readily wear their archive. It is also these materials that are most readily associated with experiences of wonder. Wonder, as Socrates reminds us, is the beginning of philosophy. It is, however, something of a temporal hinge as John Sallis points out: wonder is both inaugural and memorial, it points forward and back. Zwicky, McKay, and Graham all explore elemental materiality in their work in a way that raises both the issue of temporality and the question of wonder.

To begin this chapter I want to argue that an experience of wonder has a metaphorical dynamic; wonder is, consequently, an ethics (Levinas refers to ethics as an epiphany) inasmuch as it opens us to the plurality of time, to temporal metaphoricity. Thus, in light of the previous discussion of archives and deep time, wondering at the archive of nature (that is, being open to the natural world as an archival encounter) is to be in an ethical relation, it is to face the deep time of the elemental other. In the next three sections of the chapter I examine the poetry of Zwicky, McKay and Graham as examples of lyric ethics in light of their treatments of wonder and of lyric time.

Bedrock looms in the archival elegies that Jan Zwicky writes for Ludwig Wittgenstein. Zwicky's book *Wittgenstein Elegies* engages Wittgenstein's approach to logic as an elemental grounding. The "sublimity" of logic is the wonder that Zwicky embodies when she creates poems out of Wittgenstein's propositions, when she lyricizes his "bedrock" so to speak. The consequence of her engagement with the wonder and lyric time of Wittgenstein's logic informs her treatment of history and nostalgia in relation to landscape in her most recent book *Robinson's Crossing*. In this book, the title poem is an example of temporal metaphoricity expressed in wonder at the elemental landscape, and wonder at the capacity of the deep time of landscape to inhabit her own time, her own body.

Don McKay observes the conceptual consequences of our failure to reckon with temporality in environmental ethics. McKay's early book *Long Sault*, first published in book form in 1975, archives the St. Lawrence River. In doing so it lyrically blends two different times: the period prior to the damming of the Long Sault rapids and after (and the many-times of Long Sault's shenanigans as a pseudomythological figure). Anthropomorphized as the elemental embodied and active in strange and divergent social contexts (in a bar in Kapuskasing, taking lessons from his grandmother), Long Sault is an object of wonder. Yet the static, imperative-less response to the Long Sault rapids (as expressed in bland civic memorials) is contrasted with Long Sault, the embodied spirit, as an example of the importance of having wonder in the face of temporal and material plurality presented by the elemental force of the river. The relationship between wonder and the elemental comes to the fore in McKay's more recent chapbook *Varves*. Here McKay deals with the deep time of geology in a way that interrogates the question of wonder in the movement between "stone" and "astonished." By encountering the other time of the elemental, thinking "stone" in terms of "rock," one is forced to reassess one's apprehension of archives—personal, social, and geophysical. The effect is to face the time of things otherwise, to enact a lyric ethics that is compelled to wonder.

For Jorie Graham wonder as a consequence of the archival encounter with the elemental, with the nonhuman, is central to the environmentalist implications of her work. The poem "Subjectivity" from her book *Materialism* demonstrates how wonder, as a metaphorical, lyrical structure, can present an ethical moment that is engaged—thematically and formally—with a temporal ecology. In her recent book *Never*, Graham examines the role of a temporally concerned archival apprehension of the natural world as a means of representing in time the experience of wonder. In the poems "Prayer" and "Evolution" it is the dissonant quality of this experience that enacts the ethical interruption of personal time by the non-systematic depths of elemental time. Both poems are self-conscious attempts at being responsible to the different times of things through lyrical apprehension.

Lyric ethics is being open (through wonder made possible by archival[2] attentiveness) to the relational materiality of the world, it is opening ourselves to the different times of the world in a way that brings the world before our existence and after our existence into the realm of our responsibility. Environmental ethics typically focuses on how the contemporary environment "needs" us. What I am trying to suggest is that lyric ethics, informed by lyric matter and lyric time, allows us to think of a world that needs us even in the context of our own non-existence. That is, the deep past and the distant future are not outside the purview of our responsibility. Lyric, as that which bridges, through its dynamic of metaphoricity, the visible and the invisible, the present and the absent, is the most effective mode of ethics in this way because it allows us to articulate our own times to the times in which we were not and will not be present. The wonder experienced in the face of the elemental in the lyric poems of Jan Zwicky, Don McKay, and Jorie Graham is the metaphorical leap/hinge/spark into this concern.

2. Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, How I Wonder What You Are

In wonder, ethics is granted in principle and the wisdom that desires philosophy as the radicalization of wonder is an ethical wisdom.

(Cornelis Verhoeven, *The Philosophy of Wonder*)

The sublime has been the subject of much reproach among contemporary ecocritics for subordinating the materiality and processes of the natural world to the rational taxonomies of human thinking. In his seminal essay "The Trouble with Wilderness," William Cronon argues that it is the aesthetics of the sublime that have determined the selection of national parks in the United States rather than issues of environmental sensitivity (73). Indeed, he goes on to argue that the "sacred sublime" that drew visitors to the parks also provoked a conception of wilderness that offered an illusory escape from worldly concerns (79-80). In short, for Cronon, the sublime encourages an evasion of environmental responsibility in that it reinforces the otherness of nature as a quantifiable object estranged from our own distinctly human realities. Are we, however, really just naval gazing when we are awestruck by mountains, or other aspects of the elemental? More recent ecocritical work has tried to recuperate the relational dynamic involved in the sublime experience. Christopher Hitt, for example, argues for a conception of an "ecological sublime" that does not reduce the experience of the wondrous to the categories of human thinking and linguistic expression. Susan Glickman's study *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* focuses on the history of the sublime in the context of Canadian landscape poetry, arguing that sublime poetics potentially offer a new sense of connectedness to the world (153). In the recent collection *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment*, several essays posit the sublime "as a concept uniquely capable of focusing contemporary ecocritical attention upon the quandaries of representation itself and their environmental implications" (xxiv). How does the experience of the sublime reflect on one's ethical orientation toward nature? What does it mean to write poetry about such things?

I focus my attention on what I call "wonder" rather than the sublime. This distinction is necessary because the "sublime" has become an overdetermined expression burdened by historical associations and prejudices. Consider, for example, that the Kantian mathematical and dynamic conceptions of the sublime presuppose the triumph of rational thinking over the extra-logical experience of the thing or event itself. Wonder, on the other hand, suggests an encounter that is not reducible to systematic logic; such an affective experience is also not reducible to objectification in the language of material distinction. By wonder I mean the experience of being at home with the difference (materially and temporally) that constitutes one's desire to make sense in the face of things. I want to emphasize the metaphoricity of this dynamic. Wonder is a paradoxical relationship between opposite forces: the desire to know and the recognition that knowing cannot be fully achieved (in any systematic way). It is the desire to stand in relation to things outside of the economy of systematic logic, enacting a constant return to the origin of philosophical contemplation, and a reconsideration of the nature of one's relations. Socrates pointed to wonder as the beginning of philosophy. It is this impulse to question the foundations of one's approach to the natural world that makes wonder an ethical orientation to the environment. It is to return through wonder to the elemental grounds, to the deep time, so to speak, of one's concern with the world.

In this section I argue that the experience of wonder is an ethical experience. The affect of wonder posited by Philip Fisher, in his book *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences*, has much in common with what Levinas understands as an ethical face to face encounter. A moment of wonder is an immediate, imperative experience of something not reducible to systematic representation. This is analogous to the encounter with the other in Levinas's ethics, where the other precedes and exceeds my logic and expresses him or herself as a "revelation," as an "epiphany" (*TI* 66, 171, 194). The experience of wonder is permeated by openness to difference, but it is not an experience that makes an object of what it encounters. Rather, to have wonder is to be open to metaphoricity, the "is" and "is not" of what is encountered. It is, moreover, in the face of the elemental, an archival experience. John Sallis points out in his book *Force of Imagination* that "Time is, above all, elemental….With elemental time, between the elements and their temporalities, there is interlacement" (192). Wonder, as both inaugural and memorial, is an experience of temporal metaphoricity. It is this apprehension of other times in the face of the elemental that makes of wonder an ethical experience.

In *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences*, Philip Fisher posits the rainbow as the quintessential experience of wonder. It is common enough to be an experience that everyone has had and yet rare enough not to have become tiresome or to have entered the realm of the ordinary. As Fisher points out, "the 'Ah!' of wonder is unreflective and immediate" (40). In this way the moment of wonder is not unlike the moment of encounter in the face to face of Levinasian ethics. It is beyond logic; it is unreflective in the way that Levinas means to say that our response to the other is unreflective. Levinas notes that "the relationship between me and the Other does not have the structure formal logic finds in all relations" (*TI* 180).

In addition, just as wonder for Fisher is an encounter with novelty, Levinas understands our confrontation with the face of the other as a moment of radical newness. He mentions in *Totality and Infinity* that "the absolutely new is the Other" (219). The face is the altogether other, it is that which puts our own subjectivity into question: "The Other remains infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign; his face on which his epiphany is produced and which appeals to me breaks with the world that can be common to us" (195). Moreover, in terms of the question of the imperative that is so important to Levinas's ethics (the other person calls out to me, the other asks for me to respond) Fisher makes similar claims for the experience of wonder: "Wonder begins with something imposed on us for thought (40)...We say that in wonder the object calls out to us, making a claim on our attention" (80). Where ethics is first philosophy for Levinas, prior to ontology, wonder is "the first of the passions" for Fisher (58). Wonder is prior to interest in the same way that ethics is prior to knowing, or prior to judgment. Fisher traces wonder back to Socrates' assertion that wonder is the beginning of philosophy. For Levinas the encounter with the other, initiated by this wondrous epiphany, is what precedes ontology; before I am fully myself I am in a relationship with the other by way of wonder.

The interruptive capacity of this radical newness is common to both wonder and ethics. Fisher states that: "The ordinary world means, in the strong sense of the word, that each thing is in its *place*. In the first experience of wonder we seem to be in the face of an object that has no *place*. But in the act of creating a place for it we do not fit it in somewhere, but find ourselves forced to undermine the nature of place altogether in order to lift many other things out of their places in order to make sense of this one" (101). This interruption of the experience of place (be it temporally or physically) is not unlike Levinas's understanding of the interruption posed by the encounter with the other. The other interrupts my totality, interrupts my solitary existence, which is dominated by the present, and makes me face infinity. The other is more important than me; thus, the other becomes the locus around which the self is oriented. The categories of subjectivity are interrupted and re-cast in order to make sense of the self in relation to the other.

Fisher hints at the metaphoricity underlying the dynamic of wonder when he discusses the interactions that comprise a wondrous experience. In discussing the explanations that finally emerged for the rainbow, Fisher points out that "now it is the amazing link between this local, intimate experience and the sky that makes up the experience of wonder. The singularity has given way to an exact and disciplined cluster of events, but the loss of uniqueness is not noticed because of the feeling of surprise that just these things fit together and have something to do with one another" (100). Wonder is thus preserved in the explanation by way of the surprising combinations of the juxtaposed contexts and circumstances. The substitutions and interconnections involved in the explanation of the event are for Fisher "the most profound examples of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and chiasmus ever produced within either thought or poetry" (119). Metaphor is explicitly important here to the process of wonder in the intellectual explanation.[3] As a process, as a relationship between things that does not totalize meaning, or the identities of the things being related, metaphor is central to the "ecological" dynamic of being responsible to the wondrous experience. Moreover, as I have argued at length in the preceding chapters, metaphor as a dynamic is far more important to Levinas's ethics than he allows—the ethics of metaphor stem from its emphasis, beyond all else, on articulatory relations. Metaphor is first and foremost about relationship—this is consistent with Levinas's desire to get philosophy away from objects and on to relationships.

The relationship between wonder and time is cast in somewhat ambivalent terms by Fisher. Ultimately, wonder exists in the articulatory temporal relations between familiarity and newness. That is, the rainbow is not so new as to be wholly unfathomable, but it is also not so well-known as to be commonplace. Fisher emphasizes the radical newness of the wondrous moment, but it is not newness wholly devoid of context. The same can be said for Levinas's face to face encounter: the other is still recognizable as human (at least in Levinas's anthropocentric terms), as requiring my assistance and responsibility. Thus, there is a temporal hinge established between the horizon of infinite novelty and the past of meaningful context.

If wonder is the origin of philosophy, as the Greeks claim, then John Sallis proposes in his essay "Imagination, Metaphysics, Wonder," that wonder is both inaugural and memorial. To have wonder is to be in the inaugural position of facing forward into the future from a philosophical point of departure; it is also to assume a memorial position inasmuch as it looks back to the deep origins of philosophical contemplation. Sallis claims that wonder is "like remembrance" (37). This remembrance is for a primordial past, a deep time that is the very unfathomable origins of philosophy. "Such archaic wonder," Sallis points out, "would be not just the beginning of philosophy (in its beginning or in its end and transmutation), but rather a beginning that would precede philosophy, a turning toward the beginning in which the very space of philosophy would open" (37). This is not unlike the primordial past which the trace recalls and from which the call for responsibility emerges for Levinas. Thus, wonder in the face of the elemental provokes a reckoning with the deep time of what is apprehended. However, wonder also provokes a reckoning with futurity inasmuch as one is faced with an openness in one's knowing. Sallis remarks that the question of what wonder is itself "comes too late"; when asking what wonder is "one moves already within the opening and wonder has already come into play in prompting that opening" (36). Levinas claims that we are always late for any meeting with the other (*OB* 150). This is also the case with the question of wonder; its temporality is plural, already involving us even as it involves us.

By focusing on the elemental, I mean to draw attention to the very relational dynamics expressed in that which underlies and involves the earthly environment. What is the weather if not an example of the elemental responding to the cycles and pressures of relational demands? What is bedrock if not the expression of elemental relationships over time within the very mantle of the planet? Moreover, as Levinas reminds us in *Totality and Infinity*, the elemental cannot be grasped in its wholeness;

it merely presents its sides, or faces, to us: one cannot pick up the wind (131). Through its cycles and sediments the elemental raises the issue of temporality; it most readily wears its archive. It is, consequently, the metaphoricity of time that is involved in our apprehension of the elemental. As John Sallis points out in *Force of Imagination*, there is "interlacement," or in other words, an articulatory dynamic, between temporalities in the elemental (192). There are different times that are expressed together in the experience of the elemental: Sallis turns to the example of the different temporal experiences operative within a snowstorm to emphasize this point ("Under the spell of such time, even the most familiar things assume a different tempo") (194). In addition, however, the elemental also asks us to think differently about materiality. The very fact that the elemental cannot be grasped in its entirety, that it cannot be treated as a discrete object, requires that it be apprehended in the terms of material metaphoricity. The elemental "is" and "is not" inasmuch as any apprehension of it is necessarily permeated by that which exceeds our experiential capacity—the bedrock disappears from view, the wind and the ocean spend themselves even after we have left.

In *Force of Imagination* John Sallis argues that what is required of philosophy is that it return to the elements, to the elemental that is manifested in the world: "In such a turn one will, then, recover an exorbitant sense of *element*, a sense that was in play in early Greek thought but that also survives in the common discourse that refers to wind, rain, snow, etc as the elements" (155). Wonder, as an archival encounter[4] with the deep, nonhuman times of things, enacts such an engagement with the elemental. As such, wonder presupposes ethical relationships. Near the end of *Otherwise Than Being* Levinas describes the openness to the other that is involved in his conception of ethics and declares that "It is this wonder that has been the object of the book proposed here" (181). Similarly, Stephen Jay Gould describes "one of those magic moments in any scholar's life" where his wonder at James Hampton's folk-art piece *Throne* caused his book about deep time to take shape immediately in his head (*TA* 184). In both cases wonder is intrinsic to the very ethical projects of both authors: Levinas's attempt to account for our responsibility to the other, and Gould's attempt to reckon with the flawed archive of geological history and our relationship to the mystery of nonhuman time. The archival experience of wonder in the face of the elemental is an example of what I mean by lyric ethics. To demonstrate this I turn now to the poetry of Zwicky, McKay and Graham. The works of all three poets are examples of lyric ethics through their engagement with the question of wonder, the elemental, and the temporal metaphoricity of archival approaches to the environment.

3. The Granite of Logic, the Sediment of Home: Jan Zwicky

These are the elements,
which is to say,
the difficulty.

(Jan Zwicky, from "String Practice," *Robinson's Crossing*)

Zwicky's poetry exemplifies two different but related approaches to the archival encounter with the elemental. While issues of temporality are omnipresent in her work evidenced by her recurrent employment of musical and historical subjects, one of her earlier books, *Wittgenstein's Elegies*, and her most recent book *Robinson's Crossing* archive the elemental through examining both the roots of thinking and its relationship to wonder, and the elemental composition of home. In an essay included in a natural history collection, Zwicky describes a situation on her family farm where she is forced to weigh the decision to destroy a beaver dam against the fact that she wants to save trees from being flooded. The elemental forces of nature come into conflict with her own elemental sense of family history: the homesteading of her great-grandparents is an elemental constituent of her personal relationship to home and to the landscape of her farm. She remarks in the essay that "wilderness depends not on the absence of human interaction with the land, but rather its quantity and style. Wilderness exists…in greater or lesser degrees wherever we allow communities of non-humans to shape us at least as much or more than we shape them" ("Wilderness and Agriculture" 193). By involving wilderness with human dwelling, Zwicky puts forward a view of sustainable relationships with the environment where our domestic habitation is practiced in consort with the elemental forces and cycles of wilderness. This approach, she points out, is "a bit like learning how to dance. It will require musicality, patience, social courage, attention to the other and, above all, time" (197). By time, I would propose, she means both the time of apprenticeship, and respect for the times of family and the times of the wilderness, the elemental landscape upon which the foundations of all homes are built. With the notion of the elemental as the foundation for both social and natural ecologies, I turn now to elemental foundations of sense and meaning, to the logic of Ludwig

Wittgenstein, which is a central fascination for Zwicky and recurs as an elemental trace in virtually all of her work.

In an interview with Ann Simpson in the book *Where the Words Come From* Zwicky remarks that *Lyric Philosophy* is in part an attempt to write the poetics for *Wittgenstein's Elegies* (119). Both books are engaged with archival concerns. Both books are engaged with matters of time. *Wittgenstein's Elegies* is also, however, interested in the elemental by way of its concern with the foundations of thinking and meaning. Bedrock looms in the archival elegies that Zwicky writes for Ludwig Wittgenstein. By creating poems out of Wittgenstein's propositions, by lyricizing his "bedrock," so to speak, Zwicky exposes the "sublimity" of logic; she reveals a relational dynamic in the book between the possibilities of wonder and the elemental foundations of logic.

Elegies are archival structures. They are lyric memorials, remembrances built upon metaphors. As an elegy, *Wittgenstein's Elegies* follows a rough chronological development of Wittgenstein's personal and philosophical life, delving into the archive of his work and recasting that archive in imagined combinations. The first poem begins with the end; that is, it begins with the solution to philosophy as Wittgenstein thought it was when he published the *Tractatus*. The language of the first poem "Philosopher's Stone" employs the crystallographic manner of Wittgenstein's early writings as it focuses on the elemental spectacle of starlight: "Immense turn in the deep black, / Small points of light, faint gleam or slash / Among some buried axis, what reticulated wink / … Each note pure, perfectly / Distinct: the graveness of a star" (13). The emphasis on points, axes and distinctions is consistent with Wittgenstein's interest in the instruments of analysis and their role in the clarity he sought to bring to the logical dilemmas that consumed him. In the preface to the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein declares the end of his philosophical project; he has found the ultimate solution: "the truth of the thoughts that are here communicated seems to me unassailable and definitive. I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems" (4). It is from this note of finality that the poem begins and proceeds to introduce the difficulties with "what cannot be said" into the various ways that Wittgenstein comes to reconsider his project.

What can be said about the world, according to Wittgenstein, can be said clearly; the rest—questions of aesthetics and desire, for example—we must pass over in silence. It is this combination of strict analytic clarity with a mystical acknowledgement of the limits to his enterprise that serves as the articulatory dynamic of the *Tractatus*. This dynamic is also at work in Zwicky's poem. On the one hand, "Words show us everything. How? Sense is / Vertical, position in the counterpoint" (16). On the other hand, there is the "necessary harmony: aesthetics, ethics, / Truth to make whole presences in every word, / The flicker of an eye" (16). The poem moves between the strictures of position, of the ability of words to show us things, and the harmony of that which escapes words—the extra-linguistic flickering eye. "Love is despite the rock which is the world," Zwicky writes; indeed, love, as that which escapes what can be said, spills carelessly "Down the heavy granite face" of our orders of thinking (17). The elemental groundings of logical thinking are here, as they are in the later poems, cast as rock. Love, however, as an "unspeakable act of will," is built into the crystals of rock, it is a "brilliant passion" involved in the very foundations of order itself, "of the moveless glinting sea" (17). Thus, just as this opening poem formally reflects what Zwicky notes in her preface as the "play of voices among Wittgenstein's public personae," (9) there is also the play of the unspeakable among the granite orders of the world—a fact that asserts itself more forcefully as the book proceeds.

In each successive poem we are presented with the inability of the world to neatly arrange itself in time according to systematic understanding, and yet the ability of that same world to present itself as meaningful experience. Thus, time opens up throughout the book. In the poem "The Death of Georg Trakl," for example, the voices of Wittgenstein, Trakl and a narrator intermingle and echo each other emphasizing the meaningfulness of what cannot be put into words, the "unsayable itself / Directly echoed" (23). This poem "speaks echoes"; it blends different times together underscoring the temporal metaphoricity of the encounter between Trakl and Wittgenstein—an encounter that did and did not occur. That is to say, a distraught Trakl, who had been the beneficiary of Wittgenstein's philanthropy, tried to get Wittgenstein to meet him at his military post during an emotionally difficult moment in the First World War. Wittgenstein came but arrived three days after Trakl had committed suicide. The poem places Trakl and Wittgenstein in resonant relation as sympathetic souls, as echoes of different engagements with similar questions of elemental meaning. Their times, however, do not meet in the poem—Wittgenstein is late for the meeting. Moreover, Zwicky has placed parts of their respective writings in lyrical arrangement. Propositions from the *Tractatus* are rendered in the form of a poem; at the end of the fourth section of the "The Death of Georg Trakl," Trakl's words seamlessly follow Wittgenstein's, as the poem itself blends the two. By lyricizing Wittgenstein's archive, Zwicky draws his work into the realm of poetry, into a relation with the concerns of Trakl. However, the meeting of the two is not achieved in systematic time; the answers they both seek are not reducible to the presences of logic or history.

If the *Tractatus* is concerned with the elements of thinking, with the foundational bedrock of meaning, then Zwicky's lyrical organization of various propositions to fashion a kind of found-poem is a lyrical apprehension of the "sublimity" of Wittgenstein's logic. It is an openness to the wonder of the elements of thinking. She indicates as much in the poem "Confessions," which is composed of excerpts from Wittgenstein's various works. The poem begins by raising the connection between wonder and logic: "*in what sense can we say / That logic is sublime? Thought is surrounded / By a halo*" (47). The poem builds to an answer to this question through repeated reference to the systematic limits of logic, to the problems of imposing rigid structures on the world as a means of extracting meaning. Instead, the poem appeals to the way in which having wonder in the face of the world is our only recourse in the absence of strict systems: "*The living speech of man is not a calculus. / The most that can be said is: we construct / Ideal languages, build through the clouds of dreams*" (49). Ultimately, we run out of reasons to prove our desires, our reasons for thinking the way that we do: "*Where our spade is turned, there we must rest*" (49). This echoes a passage from the *Philosophical Investigations* where Wittgenstein declares that when "I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'" (85). Bedrock here is the elemental grounding of one's motivations, one's desire, and as such is not ultimately reducible to logical explanation. Thus, if logic is sublime in the poem it is because it is ultimately constituted (as an interruption to any systematic way of knowing) by wonder in any apprehension of the reasons for one's desires and motivations. The elements of meaning, therefore, are constituted by a certain amount of wonder. This is illustrated in the poem's conclusion, which is the only intrusion of the narrator in a poem otherwise dominated by Wittgensteinian quotes and paraphrases:

> The silent path. The dappled shore.
> Blue, blue water.
> Mist about the mountains. Oh
> Can it be borne, a peace this tense
> World swelling like an ache?
>
> Poised as the mist begins to lift.
> Poised as the mist begins to lift.
>
> A reach
>
> This is the very answer. (55)

The poem ends with mist on mountains (the elemental); it ends with a reach as the mist begins to lift, as the foundations of meaning appear. What appears, however, is not a thing or a defined structure, but the dynamic of reaching, the imperative of relationship, of ongoing process. The potential embodied in the way we wonder about the world tells us something about the essence of the world, about its foundations; we are faced with its inexpressible depth, the deep time, we might say, of its meaning. This is an example of the metaphoricity alive in the relational dynamic of meaningful attention to the elemental foundations of making sense. It is the openness of wonder in a world that, to paraphrase Wittgenstein, is all that is the case.

The interaction of logic, elements, and wonder in *Wittgenstein Elegies* is relevant not only to the explicitly thematically related poem about Wittgenstein in *Songs for Relinquishing the Earth*, "The Geology of Norway," (which I discussed at length in Chapter Two) but is also relevant to a more environmentally focused approach to the elemental in Zwicky's most recent book *Robinson's Crossing*. In this book, Zwicky explores her relationship to the landscape of her youth through an archival exploration of family history, which leads to larger meditations on history itself and the epiphanic moments of memory and nostalgia.

Time is considered from a number of perspectives in this book, including from a more abstract level. There are, for example, four poems that all share the title "History," in addition to sharing epigraphic salutes to Bach, Bartok, and Haydn. These poems affectively offer an example of lyric time where history is explicitly apprehended through metaphoricity. The temporality of history is approached through short lyrical narratives about competing for food with mice in the cupboard, about the way light gathers in the midst of oppression, about the surreal quality of fish and hands running through hair, about the contentiousness of reflections in walls that divide. The "History" poems do not treat a specific history; rather they underscore the ecological relations among different anonymous contexts of time. The result is that, in contrast to the very specific historical archive in the poems about family, it is the dynamic itself of temporal metaphoricity that is foregrounded, the very process of its ecology. Moreover, the fact that these poems are inspired by musical compositions suggests that the apprehension of time is one which involves significant depth because, as Zwicky remarks in *Lyric Philosophy*, "Music is the pre-meaning of speech" (L265). Music is, moreover, when it functions as the roots of language, "the linguistic medium in which the images of lyric thought are at home" (L216). Thus, the musical resonance implied in these apprehensions of history underscores the degree to which temporality is apprehended as lyric time.

In the poem "Nostalgia" time is handled in a more concrete manner, through the discovery of a clock; yet, the dynamic of temporal metaphoricity is once again emphasized. The poem involves the speaker searching through boxes after her mother has departed for a nursing home. Upon finding an old clock with great sentimental value, the speaker attempts to account for the way in which the small object measures time: "not time, then, or not / exactly – you name some other loss, some / stillness, some thing inside the stillness / of that room: not memory, but / perhaps what memory's for" (51). It is the time beside time ("exemplary" time we might say in the context of Agamben and the example) that the clock represents; the time that connects and resonates with the different times of her childhood and associations with her mother. It is the time not contained by a singular history: "It's not my childhood / but the place it's gone / that I can't get to … / what history isn't, / but the silence in between the ticking / is" (54). Temporality here is apprehended in the terms of metaphoricity; time is and is not inasmuch as it is not reducible to a systematic account of history even as it confronts her as memory, as nostalgia.

The elemental comes to the fore in *Robinson's Crossing* in the numerous references to weather and to the landscape at different points in history. Like the inability to fully reconcile the past with the present that is explored in "Nostalgia," the prose poem "Black Spruce" focuses on the destruction of a tree that has served as a place of childhood meditation for the speaker. She is not prepared for her encounter with the tree years later as an adult: it is no longer there, having been consumed by rising river waters as the result of beaver dams. The experience is disarming. The poem ends with an extremely long and anxious sentence detailing her flight from the river bank and her feeling of profound loss: "The cold weight in the pit of my stomach – something awry where I thought I was least vulnerable, in the place that was stable when other things weren't…I am stumbling up through the cutwood, the deadfall and the prickered undergrowth, not crying but suddenly in a hurry, bursting out the northeast corner into the winter-white hayfield, under those dry, swollen clouds, in my home place, lost" (62). The effect is epiphanic, wondrous, but not in a way that confirms her sense of security and place in the world, rather it forces her to consider the destruction of her own elemental security at the hands of other elements, the rising waters, the lives of beavers who have intruded into her vulnerability, into her own sense of the past.

The title poem of the collection is the best expression of the relationship between wonder and the elemental as a function of the apprehension of the different times of archives. The poem itself archives both family legends and personal experience as these relate to a sense of home, both physically and spiritually. The poem opens with the wondrous account of the family dog somehow sensing the arrival two days early of his master, the speaker's great-grandfather, Ernest, returning from work on the distant southern harvests. Ernest got off the train in the middle of the night, made Robinson's Crossing, and then headed for home; the dog, however, sensed his approach. The poem has two articulated focuses: one is the fact that this story matters to the speaker; the other is Robinson's Crossing itself, which was the Pembina river crossing by which people continued their journeys north and west at the end of the railway lines in the early part of the last century. The crossing continues to exist for the speaker, despite the presence of new highways and bridges over distant sections of the river. The impression conveyed by the landscape nonetheless brings the past crossing together with the present, mixing times: "You come in, / on the backs of slightly crazy Europeans, every time / you lift your eyes across a field of swath / and feel your throat catch / on the west horizon" (37).

The articulated relationship between times culminates for the speaker in the poem when she recounts her experience raking leaves at the farm for her elderly mother. Sorting the grass and dirt with her hands she observes with wonder that the elemental is involved in the very materiality and history of her family.

> The smell
> was mesmerizing: musty, sweet,

> dank, clay-ey; green —
> and with a shock I realized
> what it was: the same smell
> as my family. Not because
> our boots and gloves
> were covered in it, nothing
> you could shower off — it was
> the body's scent, the one
> that's on the inside
> of your clothes, the one a dog
> picks up. Our cells were
> made of it (39)

The speaker digs through the earth, which is work very much implicated in the different times of her family—her elderly mother cannot do what she once could. The speaker is confronted with a moment of wonder at the elemental connections between family and earth. In her apprehension of this relational dynamic, she is open to the metaphoricity of her own archive; that is to say, her "domicile," her *arkheion*, her home has come forward to her through immeasurably deep time, and brings with it the elemental earth, which is in turn extended to those she loves, to her own body. Things are themselves and yet are each other. The earth moves through her family archive as an apprehensible but irreducible force; it is precisely her openness to the metaphoricity of her own time and her own matter that makes this apprehension possible.

In the end "the story [of the dog] matters" like time *matters* in the elemental. The story is the expression of connections that underlie the family and its relationship to the land. There is an implied ethics in the apprehension of this relationship. The speaker is ecologically implicated in the matter of her environment, both terrestrially and in terms of her family, as well as in the temporality of her environment, whether it be the earlier relationship to the land and the river by way of Robinson's Crossing, the current relationship with her mother, or to the deeper time of the elemental soil itself. "Robinson's Crossing" underscores the importance of being open to time, to elemental time, as a function of being responsible to the ecology of one's home, one's natural archive.

4. A Stone, Astonished: Don McKay

Who are you?
You are the crystal that picks up
its many deaths.
You are the momentary mind of rock.

(Don McKay, from "Petrified—," *Varves*)

Just as elegies are involved in the temporal concerns of Jan Zwicky, Don McKay speculates in his essay "Otherwise than Place" that perhaps all storytelling about place involves an elegiac dimension. That is, in making a place our own, by imbuing it with our own history and personal significance, we associate it with the inevitable losses that "take place," as it were, in our lives. Place for McKay involves memory, it involves a "momentary domestication of time" (48). Place is the locus of the human impulse to organize time, to claim it from its infinite boundlessness; it is "wilderness to which history has happened" (39). The capacity to think otherwise than place involves an approach to the environment that is fundamentally concerned with temporality, with the different scales and scopes of time as they are relevant to the nonhuman world. Such an apprehension of the environment involves asking not "what the beach is to me?" but "what am I to the beach?" (39). This involves thinking in the terms of what McKay calls "geologic time," or, what I call in the context of this project, "deep time." Thinking consistently in terms of such temporal depths, however, is impractical as a sustained enterprise. We are not familiar, as I mentioned in the last chapter, with approaching the natural world in the context of time, of asking the different times of things. Consequently, McKay proposes that we "domesticate" the temporal wilderness by establishing place built on memory and story—built on archives.

But what might such stories, or archives, look like? How might they be open to the different times of the environment without simply reinforcing human temporal parameters? By considering McKay's long poem, *Long Sault*, and his chapbook *Varves*, I argue that McKay's poems demonstrate the ethical implications of apprehending the temporal metaphoricity of the natural world. Through the articulatory dynamic he establishes among the archives of the Long Sault rapids, and among the relationship between wonder and the deep time of "astonishment" and "stones," McKay enacts the lyric time that is a function of lyric ethics; he demonstrates the ethical imperative of facing the other times of things.

In *Long Sault* McKay concerns himself with the erasure of a natural wonder: the Long Sault rapids on the St. Lawrence River, just southwest of Cornwall, Ontario. The poem is a reaction to and a meditation on the significance of the destruction of the rapids that occurred in the late 1950s as part of a hydroelectric project in Cornwall that involved damming and flooding large sections of the river. When originally conceiving of the poem McKay notes in remarks included in *The Long Poem*

Anthology that he had in mind an "angry elegy" (321). However, as he began to consider the ways in which the power and motion of the rapids expressed themselves beyond the confines of the dam he "found them moving in surprising places" (321). Indeed, it is the capacity of the rapids here to resonantly inhabit other contexts as sympathetic dynamics, as expressions of the elemental wilderness in otherwise domestic and far-flung circumstances in space and time that emphasizes the metaphoricity involved in their apprehension in the poem. *Long Sault* archives a natural wonder by infiltrating other archives, by interrupting commonplace senses of time with the irreducible rhythms of dance, with the other times of the elemental.

In writing his poem, McKay examined archival accounts of the Long Sault rapids. The section entitled "At the Long Sault Parkway" begins with a quote from one such historical record: "The noise, the continual motion, and magnitude of the contending waves, render the Longue Sault, at once an object of terror and delight; these burst upon each other, and tossing aloft their broken spray, cover the stream with a white and troubled surface, as far as the eye can extend" (130). The "terror" and "delight" of the spectacle emphasizes the sublime effect the rapids had on the beholder. Since the damming, however, such elemental fury has been domesticated; one can "Ride over the famous Long Sault Rapids. / Boat leaving every 2 hours – 9 AM to 7 PM" (127). Indeed, the rapids themselves have been reduced to a systematic temporality, one that proceeds according to the dimensions and calculations of transport and trade: "You're better off now, rocking on the porch, you lap / lap, lap at the shores of memory, / counting to infinity by ones" (130). The elemental chaos of the rapids has been consumed by the ordered world of commerce, and exists now in a time of very specific ends.

Much of the poem is concerned with the question of how to remember the rapids, and as such challenges the prevailing attempts at archiving its existence. The placid waters of the man-made lake are at odds with the speaker's memory of the rapids. The artifacts, churches, and houses that had to be moved to higher ground prior to the flooding are, "Neither dead / nor alive / but suitably commemorated" (131). The rhetoric that accompanied the project was such that the speaker could "never / really know which history / was being made" (132). Thus, the question of what to remember itself is a vexed one—the civic memory does not account for this by being as placid as the now-calmed waters of Long Sault. However, the rest of the poem demonstrates that to remember Long Sault, to face its archive, is not simply to look back in time. Rather, it is to be alive to the ways in which the elemental dynamic of the rapids expresses itself in different times, in different contexts; it is to be open to the temporal metaphoricity of Long Sault.

These temporal articulations are most readily apparent in the last two parts of the poem. In the two sections entitled "The River is Laughing to Itself," for example, where the rhythmic time of the rapids themselves are expressed in the dancing of children, the time of the river involves the time of the speaker through the urge to participate in dance. The moment of leaning over the rapids is a moment where the speaker is occupied, interrupted by the other time of the rapids, a moment he feels as the rhythm of dance:

> ...leaning
> over the rapids for one moment
> I get caught for one moment, I get
> occupied, though just
> for a moment by the dance that
> unmoves movers and the
> urgency of blood becomes ah but there
> I poise when
> in
> falls my papermate
> ballpoint
> pen. (147)

The moment is occupied by another moment which is infused with paradox, with the articulation between moving and not moving, between the dance as one understands it and the dance as it happens to the body. Moreover, this is a moment that escapes language and escapes being documented as his pen falls into the rapids themselves. The river, in this sense, is more than his writing; its temporal rhythms are more than can be written into an archive.

The temporal metaphoricity of Long Sault is personified in the poem as a kind of elemental at large. Long Sault appears in Kapuskasing, in a boxing match, in a trenchcoat looking like Spencer Tracy, in conversation with his grandmother, in partnership with the "raftsman / Indian / coureur do bois" that have, through different times, paddled the rapids (156). In all of these circumstances Long Sault is that element of wilderness in the various relations of these different contexts; as a trickster figure, as a chaotic interruption of closed systems of order, Long Sault enacts the imposition of the other. The poem, is explicit, however, that what Long Sault imposes is a different time. In "the Long Sault Rapids in Kapuskasing," for example, the speaker explicitly apprehends Long Sault as temporality: "I guess you could say there was time / about him / though it wasn't any worn down suit or shoes. / Maybe the way he'd say / it doesn't signify a fart / when people asked him what he meant" (151). Long Sault is time, but he is a time resistant to signification; that is, he is time that cannot be reduced to the linguistic logic of Newtonian time (or, for that matter, the logic of farts[5]). Consequently, Long Sault is an example of temporal metaphoricity; he requires, as the articulation among a plurality of times, a different relationship to time. Metaphor is McKay's manner of apprehension in this poem—Long Sault is and is not the times of his different contexts[6]. As such he cannot, as an elemental force be dammed, or made placid like the waters of the river.

Thus, to remember Long Sault, to archive the rapids, is to be alive to the elemental presence of the rapids in different times and different contexts, and it is, potentially, to think otherwise than dams. The poem enacts an archival attention to the river that is open to its deep time and to its future potential as the kind of rhythm expressed by the speaker's dancing children, as the kind of creative spirit expressed by the traveling musician and other wild personas of the river. This openness to temporal plurality underscores the lyric ethics at work in the poem. Consequently, the poem is an example of the kind of ethical archive we might build in order to remember a place; however, it is not a static, placid memory frozen in time—it is one that asks again and again, in different temporal contexts, how we might responsibly approach the nonhuman world, how we might be most responsible to its elemental difference, its capacity to make us wonder.

The capacity to wonder, indeed, the very embodiment of wonder is one of the principle subjects of one of McKay's most recent publications, the chapbook *Varves*.[7] In this work the relationship between wonder and the elemental is explicit; it is cast by McKay as the relationship between astonishment and petrifaction, between what we think of as rock and stone. The term "varve" refers to the layers of sediment that have accumulated at the bottoms of ancient lakes; the coarse grains brought into the lake during the running of summer rivers contrast with the fine silt sediments collected during the static winter months. Varves are of particular interest to geologists who read their patterns in order to determine the chronology of glacial sediments. Thus, time is intrinsic to the phenomena of varves. By bookending the collection with the poems "Astonished—" and "Petrified—" McKay emphasizes the degree to which temporality is opened up in different but interrelated ways in the experience of wonder. Ultimately, encountering the other time of the elemental, thinking stone in terms of rock, forces a reassessment of one's apprehension of archives—personal, social, and geophysical. The effect is to face the time of things otherwise, to enact a lyric ethics that is compelled to wonder.

The opening poem of the book concerns itself explicitly with the question of wonder in relation to the elemental. "Astonished—" foregrounds the linguistic relationship between the words "stone" and "astonished." There are a series of paradoxical relationships established in the poem that underscore the articulatory dynamic involved in the experience of wonder: "Standing there, your face / cratered by its gawk, / you might be the symbol signifying æon. / What are you, empty or pregnant? Somewhere / sediments accumulate on seabeds, seabeds / rear up into mountains, ammonites / fossilize into gems. Are you thinking / or being thought?" (1). These paradoxes involve the elemental circumstances of birth, both biologically and terrestrially, and of thinking; that is, the elemental logic of thinking that I discussed at length in terms of Zwicky's poetry. To be astonished for McKay is to have "the border / washed out by so soft a thing as weather"; it is to have "Someone inside you" step "from the forest and across the beach / toward the nameless all-dissolving ocean" (1). Astonishment involves an openness in one's own elemental composition, in terms of thinking and in terms of the "someone," the wilderness, the otherness, that prevents us from being a discrete totality. As a consequence of this, one is open to the deep time of the elemental itself, the deep time of stones, as "the moment / filling with its slow / stratified time" interrupts the systematic temporality of one's conventional logic (1).

If astonishment makes us face the time of stones, then petrifaction makes us face the time of rock. The final poem in the collection, "Petrified—,“ notes how the experience of petrifaction makes "you stiffen in the arms of wonder's dark / undomesticated sister" (11). The difference between stone and rock is the difference between geological matter (stones) that we have domesticated, brought into our homes as ornaments, and geological matter (rocks) that remain outside our artistic frames of reference, outside our ornamental purview. Stones and rocks are both involved with each other; that is, to domesticate rock into stone is not to wholly deny the deep time of rock, or to efface its elemental difference. Rather, our relationship to stones has the potential for both positive and negative consequences; there is at once the potential for acknowledging the rock in stones, its deep time (as is the case in the poem "Astonished—") and for denying it, freezing the stone into ornament. McKay explores both of these potential apprehensions of stones in *Varves*. In the poem "Gneiss," for example, early neolithic humans are presented as requiring that "some of the rocks which comprised their island should stand up with them against the leveling wind and eroding rain" (2). In short, "They insisted that rock be stone" (2). However, as the speaker inspects these stones arranged in a circle on the Scottish Isle of Lewis, he begins to recognize the degree to which early humans had not simply domesticated rock, but opened themselves to its elemental wilderness: "Imagine our ancestors tracing these surfaces, whorled fingertip to gnarled rock, reading the earth-energy they had levered into the air" (2-3). Moreover, the speaker observes that we have continued to have such apprehensions of the elemental; whenever and wherever we have been excited or intoxicated about the world we have "locked the fury into the fugue and the car crash into the high school prom" (3). The speaker attributes to our ancestors this apprehension of the elemental in the terms of metaphoricity; both rock and stone prefigure the articulatory relationships to things where we have been open to the wilderness, to the otherness of our temporal relationship to the earth. The speaker's response to this realization is to take some time: "Better stop here. Better spend some time" (3).

The poem "Quartz Crystal," however, presents the consequences of thinking stone in terms of ornament rather than in terms of rock, rather than in terms of deep time. The poem depicts an author (very likely McKay) coming to terms with what it means to think of the temporality of a piece of quartz crystal that has long been regarded as an ornamental stone. The question of the stone's domestication presents itself immediately to the speaker: "It rests among the other stones on my desk— but has clearly arrived from another dimension…Here it lives in exile, a bit of locked Pythagorean air amid the pleasant clutter of my study: simple, naked, perilously perfect" (9). This encounter with the quartz crystal opens the speaker to the otherness of the stone's temporality and in doing so provokes him to question his own proprietary relationship with it: "Who do I think I am, with my little dish of stones, my ball-point pen, my shelves of books full of notions, that I should own this specimen of earth's own artifice, this form before mind or math, its axes reaching back to the proterozoic, its transparence the zen before all zen?" (9). The speaker's reaction to this dilemma, his attempt to be responsible to the situation, provokes him to change his relationship to time, to the very way in which he apprehends temporal dynamics in his life. To begin with, the poet destroys his watch, "that false professor of time" (9). However, his re-orientation to the question of time involves more radical interventions; he strips out of his clothes, he abandons his fingers and thumbs, "those tricky manipulators who have so busily converted rock to stone, who perpetrated the pyramids and silicone valley" (9). He admonishes his opposable digits for not attending to other times beyond the systematic temporality of the mechanical notions of human progress and commerce. He proceeds to give up baseball (with its diamonds), along with cribbage, fugues, and finally his own poems:

> I bid you adieu. And you,
> my little poems, don't imagine I can't hear you
> plotting under your covers, hoping to avoid
> your imminent depublication. (10)

This escalating intervention into the interests of his own life amounts to a reconsideration of his own archive—literally, in terms of the books he has published, and figuratively in terms of his interests and affections. At the end of the poem, even poems are not enough to satisfy his sense of responsibility to the deep time of the quartz. The poet has opened his archive, released it from the intentions of his life (in fact he has renounced those intentions—inasmuch as they may reveal any vanity, any attachment to the poem as ornamental object, as simple stone). Facing the elemental time of the quartz has provoked the speaker to apprehend the archival sense of his place in the world and his connections to that world differently.

The final lines of "Quartz Crystal" enact wonder, or at least the kind of attention open to wonder: "While the crystal floats like a lotus on my palm, bending the light from a dying star to dance upon my coffee cup this fine bright cenozoic morning" (10). The sentence is a fragment; it sets up a temporal situation ("while…") but does not explain what transpires. The light is dancing, attention is open-ended, time is not foreclosed, not determined, not singular (there is the suggestion that something else is happening "while" the light and the crystal interact). The temporal metaphoricity suggested by this ending, the articulation together of different times, is enabled by a moment open to wonder, and open to the deep time of the elemental. Indeed the connection to wonder at the end of this poem is further emphasized by the fact that the incomplete sentence that ends "Quartz Crystal" is formally engaged by the fragmented *in medias res* beginning of the last poem in the collection, "Petrified—," a poem, as I mentioned above, explicitly about wondering at the elemental.

The movement from stone to rock in "Quartz Crystal" is an ethical movement—evidenced by the speaker's compulsion to rectify his relationship with the stone; it involves apprehending the deep time of the elemental and it involves a different kind of attention to things that is not reducible to syntax, to the systematic time of grammar. Instead, the poet's attention in this poem—as it is throughout *Varves*, and *Long Sault* for that matter—is open to wonder and the temporal plurality of the rocks and the stones, and how they interrupt his own time, compelling him to be responsible to an archive that is more than human.

5. Archiving the Many-ness of Time's Passing: Jorie Graham

Even in Kyoto,
how I long for Kyoto
when the cuckoo sings.

(Basho)

There are several references to Kyoto and to the Kyoto Protocol in Jorie Graham's environmentally focused 2002 book *Never*. In this collection Graham explicitly addresses the relationship between experiencing wonder at the elemental forces that collide and mix along the seashore and the role of lyric thinking in being responsible to the different temporality of such environments. The entire book is written against the backdrop of environmental depletion, the loss of habitat, the increasing extinction of species. However the approach Graham takes to these dilemmas is not simply a realist chronicle of atrocities. Rather, she carefully interrogates the wonder associated with apprehending the different relationships to time embodied in the elemental environment. The book explores the temporal metaphoricity inherent in trying to archive the different times of things.

Justin Quinn writes that "Graham belongs to a poetic tradition which attempts to encompass the most ecstatic moments of spiritual transcendence without absconding from political and social contexts" (22). Graham's engagement with wonder is a concern with ethics. If, as I have been arguing, we can think of wonder as being an ethical encounter, how does this operate in Graham's poems? More specifically, how does wonder in her poems present an ecological vision? The experience of wonder in her poem "Subjectivity" from *Materialism* is the experience of the "meanwhile," of an articulatory temporal dynamic. The poem is also, formally, a reflection of this dynamic because attention is drawn to the middle section of the poem and the play of time and light that emphasizes the process and ethics of the relational dynamic enacted between the consciousness of objects and the consciousness of ecological integration. In *Never* the poems "Prayer" and "Evolution" present more sustained experiences of wonder in the face of the elemental. Both poems interrogate the boundaries between personal time and the deeper time of the elements in order to emphasize the productive dissonance—that is to say the ethical openness—that results from apprehending the degree to which one's own time involves the interruptive time of nonhuman scales and depths.

In "Subjectivity" the principal moment of wonder occurs at the end of the third and last section, but the dynamic of the poem is such that we are led back into its middle section for a more complete reckoning with that final moment. The poem plays with a plurality of times in this way; it compels a return to its middle, to the midst of its unfolding in order to fully apprehend its conclusion. Its formal structure, in other words, enacts temporal metaphoricity. The poem opens with the speaker (a young girl) finding a butterfly that she initially believes to be dead. The butterfly is subjected to intense scrutiny as the speaker is amazed at the textures and colours at work in the composition of such a thing. Moreover, it occurs to her not only as a physical object but also as a question of time, as something that seems like "light from another century" (25). The third and last section of the poem details the speaker's attempt to preserve the butterfly, to archive it by placing it beneath heavy books as a specimen, as something subjected to taxonomic order. The poem culminates, however, with a moment of wonder that interrupts the speaker's analytic presuppositions as the butterfly lifts off into the light after having been warmed and rejuvenated by the sun. To the astonishment of the speaker who had thought it to be dead, the butterfly flies off into the sky "rising up of a sudden out of its envelope of glances— / a bit of fact in the light and then just light" (31). All the speaker is left with at the end of the poem is "just light."

The second part of the poem is completely different from parts one and three inasmuch as it does not directly participate in the narrative of the girl finding and archiving the butterfly; however, its relationship to the larger narrative of the poem is more elemental—it underlies the relational dynamics that are expressed in the poem. On the surface, part two is about sunlight passing over a body as time passes in a room. The extensive attention to sunlight, as elemental temporality itself, anticipates the poem's conclusion, the "just light" that remains at the end. It is this focus on light that compels a return at the end of the poem back to this middle section, back to the intense discussion of sunlight.

Part two opens with the speaker referring to herself in the third person, as *she*, as an independently observed being. The slowly but inexorably moving sunlight acts as an imperative to the speaker: "a ray of sun calling across the slatwood floor" (26). The imperative of the beam is the result of its disruptive qualities. In this demanding call, it is "less place than time," it is "less time than the shedding skin of time"; in this way it questions the sealed presence of time; it is suggestive of a relationship outside of systematic temporality, a relationship with a deeper, more infinite time (26-27). The beam of light is "now and now" it is a plurality of times; it is more than the totalized present in which the speaker is able to view herself objectively as "she." Moreover, logic, and its grammatical temporality, is not involved in this interruption of the present; the "I," the beam of light (as personal pronoun), is "without architecture, / without / beginning…" The light is beyond building or logical systematization, "nothing can be deduced-from or built upon" (27).

As the light approaches the speaker any illumination it might offer, any knowing, is conducted in the space of the "meanwhile," a word which Graham repeats a number of times:

Meanwhile the knowledge of things lies round,
    over which the beam—
Meanwhile the transparent air
    through or into which the beam—
over the virtual and the material—
    over the world and over the world of the beholder—
glides: (28).

The "meanwhile" functions here as a reflection of the temporal circumstances of this part of the poem—its suspension between the beginning and the end. The "meanwhile" also enacts the temporal metaphoricity, its articulatory dynamic, involved in the movement between object and subject, between systematic time and deep time. When the light finally illuminates the face of the speaker the pronouns shift; the "she," "her," and "it" become "me": "it being my face my being inside the beam of sun" (29).[8] The light, the imperative of its calling, the wonder that the poem opens toward at the end is here that which provokes the movement from objectivity to subjectivity. It does so, however, as a consequence of a different relationship to time: to become "I" "she is inside—(ear, cheek)—the slice of time / now on the chin, now on / the lips, making her rise into me" (29). "Her" rises to "me" as the speaker finds herself face to face with the sunlight, with its elemental temporality.

The fact that at the end of the poem we are sent back to the middle is consistent with Graham's interest in metaphoricity, in between-ness, in the "meanwhile." Formally, however, this middle section is the link between phenomena and explanation—it is the link between the contemplation of the butterfly and the experience of its sudden transformation, or transcendence—this section is, consequently, the very dynamic of the experience of wonder; it hinges together different times and different experiences of time. Between the collection of the butterfly, its assumed death, and the butterfly's subsequent reanimation and flight into the sky, we have the middle part of the poem which presents to us the process and temporality of light. Light, ultimately, is behind the explanation for the wondrous event at the end of the poem. The speaker's neighbour, identified only as "C," comments: "*that butterfly's not dead, you know…/ cold mornings like these they're very still—see* (gliding it onto / the broad-leaved stem) / *put it in sun…*" (31). Part of the girl's difficulty with the butterfly is that it is "too plural" (30). Her moment of wonder at the end is a radical openness to plurality; the butterfly is not at its end, as the girl assumed given her systematic understanding of the passage of time. Rather, like the sunlight which implicates her "now" and "now," articulating together different times, the butterfly exists in a plurality of times—it has *come* alive, but it has also always been alive.

What I wish to suggest is that in the encounter with the butterfly the speaker is open to the natural world in a way that interrupts her own totalized perception. The nonhuman other illuminates her world, so to speak, as a consequence of her reckoning with the otherness of its temporality. Moreover, the structure of the poem is such that the moment of wonder itself is the result of an articulatory dynamic (as metaphoricity) that reaches at once back into the "meanwhile" of the poem and out towards its ineffable conclusion where we are left with the irreducible and elemental potential of "just light." The speaker's archival apprehension of the world has shifted from one where things have their analytic and systematic place, to a more ethical apprehension where things have different times; they do not have the ends, that is to say deaths, she thinks she knows.

In *Never* Graham examines wonder in the context of experiencing the elemental forces of nature. The poems focus attention again and again on oceanic waves, on tides, on atmospheric and marine currents, on the meeting places between land and sea. In many ways the book is one long meditation with variations on wondering in the face of these elemental forces. Emphasizing this concern with wonder is the book's opening epigraph from John Keats, which is an exclamation of amazement upon beholding the landscape of the Lake District for the first time: "How can I believe in that? Surely it cannot be?" The book is, as a consequence of these points of focus, an example of lyric ethics. At its core is a concern for the ways in which we respond to the world in the context of environmental degradation; there are a number of references, as I mentioned, to the Kyoto Protocol and to the extinction of species and ecosystems. The poems position themselves as lyric responses to the imperative of the elemental earth in order to disrupt the way in which the otherness of elemental matter and time has been systematized and exploited. The poems explore how we might pursue a relationship to the elemental in the terms of metaphoricity, a relationship that is open to lyric temporality and, consequently, to our responsibility to the deep time of the nonhuman world, the earth itself.

The poem "Evolution" offers an example of Graham's engagement with time and wonder as a consequence of an archival apprehension of the elemental. However, before I get to this poem I begin with these issues as they are presciently expressed in the very first poem of the book. The poem "Prayer" poses the problem of reconciling personal and elemental time. The speaker marvels at the minnows caught in unseen currents at the edge of a dock. In their swirling mass they are simply the physical manifestation of underlying currents in the water; they move "without the / way to *create* current" (3). This, for the speaker, is evidence for the ways in which humans are subject to larger cycles of time and space beyond their own specific apprehension or control. However, this is not a realization that provokes despair for the speaker; rather, her wondering opens her to the freedom implicit in such irreducible forces: "this is freedom. This is the force of faith. Nobody gets / what they want. Never again are you the same. The longing / is to be pure. What you get is to be changed" (3). The speaker is open to a deeper sense of time in this moment as "infinity threads itself" through the minutes of her encounter (3). We cannot hold the world in a singular time; we move through it according to temporal dynamics that are and are not reducible to human systems. "I am free to go," the speaker observes; however, "I cannot of course come back. Not to this. Never" (3). Consequently, we are poised between two different kinds of time in the poem; on the one hand we have "here," which, in the context of our own human and necessarily imprecise expressions of temporality, is personal presence. On the other hand, we have "never," which, while retaining the trace of personal presence, explicitly asserts the non-realization of that presence. This articulatory dynamic is exemplified in the ratio with which the poem closes. "Here: never" (3). The wondrous encounter with the minnows in the current has opened the speaker to temporal metaphoricity, to time perceived in light of the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity. This encounter with the elemental forces affecting the minnows interrupts her own time exposing her to the otherness of elemental time, exposing her to the degree to which that time is involved in her own. "Here" and "never"; so it is with humans and minnows.

Time and its relationship to the environment and to ethics are explicit concerns in this book. In a footnote to the poem "Evolution," Graham remarks that she was presented with some facts about Darwin when she was composing this poem, some facts about the rate of species extinction in his day, which

> is believed to have been one every five years. Today the rate of extinction is estimated at one every nine minutes. Throughout the writing of this book, I was haunted by the sensation of that nine-minute span—which might amount to the time it takes to read any poem here before you. My sense of that time frame [and its inevitable increase, even as we 'speak'] inhabits, as well as structures, the book. It is written up against the sensation of what is now called 'ecocide.' (111)

Time haunts the poem "Evolution." In fact, there are two poems of this title in the collection; thus, they enact a kind of temporal plurality themselves. Like the theory it is named after, the first "Evolution" poem is an attempt to reckon with beginnings, and as such commits itself to an archival approach to the world. "How old are you?" the poem asks at its beginning. The activity on the seashore is fastidiously archived by the speaker; the changing shades and shapes through time of the kelp and the waves are noted in extreme detail by the speaker as she marvels at them and attempts to understand her origins in elemental terms. Questions of duration abound: "What is it has been gone a long time? / How long is the slightest chance?" (21).

Just as sunlight inspired the moment of wonder in "Subjectivity," in "Evolution," it is again sunlight, and its many interactions with the seashore, that compel the speaker to apprehend the articulatory dynamics that surround her and implicate her. The speaker ultimately realizes at the end of the poem that there is no single origin to which the time of things can be reduced. Rather, the rhythms with which things interact with other things reinforce the dynamic of metaphoricity that characterizes their temporal interrelationships: "(as the wave breaks over its own breaking) / (to rip in unison) (onto its backslide)" (25). There is the breaking and joining within the breaking of the wave. All of the descriptions of different rhythms are in separate parentheses at the end of the poem; the effect of this grammar is to pile a plurality of times on top of each other, to render them as simultaneous asides all articulated at once. But how are we to be responsible to these different times of things? "(Is there an inherent good)," the speaker asks, "(is there an inherent good in people)" (24). At the end of the poem, according to the speaker, the elements call for a lyric response; she hears a call for song: "Sing says the folding water on stiller water— / …Sing me something… / of something sing, and singing disagree" (25). The poem ends with dissonance; that is, it ends by way of lyric with an openness to "disagreement," to the different times of the seashore, of its living rhythms. The interruptive qualities are the key to this response—it is in no way a Romantic reaction. There is no discrete origin or destiny at stake here; rather, the articulatory dynamic of the waves on the shore, their interruption of each other's destinies, must be reflected in the lyric ethics that the speaker implicitly proposes at the end of this poem.

Graham's speakers spend much time engaged in lyric ethics throughout *Never*. They are constantly questioning the nature of their apprehensions, attending to the articulatory dynamics that underlie the relationships to their environments. Moments of wonder are moments of openness to the difference, to the otherness, that inhabits these relationships. Whether it is the impulse in poems like "The Taken-Down God" to dispense with the boundaries of the objectified world, both spatially (in terms of the birdsongs and other voices that come into the poem) and temporally (in terms of the "now" that is mixed at once the with "I" and destabilized to ultimately give way to "both"), or to face the depth of the fossil record in a poem like "Exit Wound," wonder is the capacity to be open to the plurality of times and spaces that compel one's environmental responsibility. Like Zwicky and McKay, Graham's archival apprehension of the elemental, her attention to the dynamics of metaphoricity that are expressed in such ecologies of time and space, constitute an example of lyric ethics.

6. Coda:

I was born because millions of years ago communities
grew out of ponds   because ponds need a way to say goodbye
because I'm always saying goodbye   and so are you

(Don Domanski, from "Sleep's Ova," *Parish of the Physic Moon*)

The focus of this chapter has been time. There exist no other careful considerations of the role of temporality in the works of these three poets. Time is central to ethics for Levinas, and I contend that it is central to the question of environmental ethics in poetry. By considering the role of wonder in relation to the elemental, it has been my aim to bring the worlds of time and matter together when apprehending the very ground and atmosphere of the earth itself. It is the elemental that, in its very materiality, most readily makes us think of time. Zwicky, McKay, and Graham are all "archivists of the elemental" for the ways in which each involves the time of the elements in their lyric explorations of our responsibility to the nonhuman other. Part of what it means to be responsible to the other is to be open to different scales and magnitudes of temporality. To apprehend the temporality of the other in a moment of wonder is to involve these other times in a relationship with one's own. It is to apprehend the responsibility that calls to us primordially, from temporal reaches that resist our conceptual frameworks.

In his essay "Going Home" Canadian poet Tim Lilburn suggests that it is in those moments when one is disarmed by beauty or a moral gesture that desire enacts a nostalgic memory even if there has been no historical correlate: "you will realize you have always known it was without parallel even if it had not always been present in memory" (183). This is a very interesting recuperation of the idea of nostalgia, a term that has suffered (not undeservedly so) from association with a kind of closed, social myth-making.[9] Nostalgia here, on the other hand, is associated with openness, with an erotic consciousness of distance, of the far-ness of things, their ungraspable-ness in the context of their own deep time. To be disarmed by beauty is to wonder, and it is to feel the involvement of another time, even if that time has no linear connection to one's own material being. It is to have a relationship with another time in the terms of temporal metaphoricity, it is to apprehend the lyric time of the other.

Just as Graham's poem "Subjectivity" compels us to return to its "meanwhile," the articulatory dynamic of its middle section, my discussion of lyric time here is meant to compel a return to the middle section of my discussion—the hinge, Chapter Three, Lyric Ethics. Both time and matter are involved in the apprehension of things in the terms of lyric ethics—one is not prior to the other, but both reflect and enact the articulatory dynamic of metaphoricity, and as such both find the break and joint of their connection in that chapter. Where I discussed the problem of thinking of matter in the strict terms of realism in the first part of this project I have closed here by discussing time in similar terms. Time is not "real" in the way that linguistic reference and the grammar of analysis would suggest. Time, like matter, requires a different kind of apprehension if we are to be responsible to the ways in which it escapes our capacity for systematic understanding, and yet at the same time intimately forms our lives. It requires, as I have been arguing, a metaphorical approach. So too do the matters and times of the natural world. To be at home responsibly in the world involves remembering and respecting the fact that we did not invent the world. We have invented ways to look at it, we have invented civilizations, systems of thinking, but, as Robert Bringhurst points out, "we didn't create it, and if we destroy it, we cannot replace it" (160). As I write this it is four minutes after one in the morning on the first spring night warm enough to open a window. Already I have been summoned by a materiality that escapes the systems of linguistic reference, by an element whose time I am familiar with but not in any way I can fully explain. How do I understand my relationship to such things? The night wind pools on the floor of my room; what fossils lurk in the sediments of such clear air?

Notes

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[1] Part of this chapter has been previously published in: Dickinson, Adam. "Love In The Time of Clearcuts – *Thinking and Singing: Poetry and the Practice of Philosophy* (Ed. by Tim Lilburn)." *The Antigonish Review* 135 (2003): 83-88.

[2] Having previously established the connection between archives and metaphoricity in Chapter Four, my use of the expression "archival attention" or "archival encounter" is not meant to displace my previous emphasis on apprehension in the terms of metaphoricity. Rather, in the context of temporality in this chapter, I use "archival encounter" in order to underscore attention to time in apprehensions of the world that are responsible to the relational terms of metaphoricity.

[3] Fisher generally speaks negatively of metaphor in the context of wonder. According to him, metaphor makes what we already know into something strange, repackages it and sends it back to us. He suggests that metaphor is engaged with "recovering what we already know, rather than discovering" (27). Metaphor calls attention to the cleverness of the mind attending to the scene rather than to the scene itself. This is a limited view of metaphor. I have been arguing at length how metaphor presents a different relationship to knowing, one that mediates between logical and extra-logical apprehension. Metaphor represents a different way of apprehending the world, not simply a repackaging of what we already know. In addition to this, I would argue that Fisher is ambivalent in his treatment of metaphor. He does acknowledge the potential power of lyric poetry to present wonder; he also implicates metaphor, as I mentioned above, in the productive explanation of wondrous experiences (22, 119). I would argue that metaphoricity, as I have been describing it, is far more important to his philosophy of wonder than he allows (in terms of his treatment of metaphor).

[4] The Early Modern fascination with *Wunderkammer*, or "cabinets of wonder," provides a precedent for thinking of wonder as an archival encounter. Cabinets of wonder were collections of disparate art and cultural objects gathered by princes and learned men. In his examination of cabinets of wonder in *The Man Without Content* Giorgio Agamben notes how "Statues and paintings stood side by side with curios and exemplars of natural history" (29). The effect of these archives was a dynamic of resonant relations where "individual objects seem[ed] to find their meaning only side by side with others" (30). In post-Hegelian approaches to art, however, "the original unity of the work of art has broken," Agamben notes, leaving a tension between the urge to bring the work of art back to its ideal space in the museum, and the urge to see the work transcend itself as an object of defined content (37). In the context of my own work, then, the archival encounter with the elemental enabled by wonder involves this tension of metaphoricity between the systems of objects, their organized relationship to us, and their temporalities that exceed the temporal contents of our own lives.

[5] To emphasize the degree to which Long Sault is not reducible to the logic of farts, the section entitled "The ghost with a hammer" details a boxing match between Long Sault and Maalox, an antacid. Maalox, who "'reads like an insurance agent,'" is not a match for Long Sault and is forced "from the ring suffering from excess gas, acid / and stomach discomfort" (152). In other words, an antacid, and its very specific argument with farts, cannot contain Long Sault.

[6] Moreover, Long Sault refuses to be captured by any systematic approach to metaphor: the poem "The Long Sault Rapids' Grandmother" makes fun of the view of metaphor as a capacity to transmit transparent meaning: "Why you / can rock your way around the world and wind up / talking to yourself. / So much – he hands this smoke ring in the air – / for metafurs" (155). "Metafur" is an extended pun in the poem. The grandmother makes pant suits for her housecat by knitting fur the cat has previously shed. The circular, self-indulgent logic of these "metafurs" is not adequate to Long Sault.

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[7] *Varves* was published by Extra Virgin Press in a limited print run in 2003. As part of the Olive Reading Series Collective, I was one of the editors who solicited the manuscript from McKay and put the publication together.

[8] "Her" becomes "I" in the light; this is the ethical imperative in Martin Buber's *I and Thou*. The "her" of the beginning of section two is as impersonal and as objectified as the "It" of Buber's I-It relation. The I of this I-it relation for Buber appears as an ego "conscious of itself as a subject (of experience and use). The I of the basic I-You appears as a person and becomes conscious of itself as subjectivity…Egos appear by setting themselves apart from other egos. Persons appear by entering into relation with other persons" (112). "Her" like the "It" or the "I" in the "I-it" is a discrete entity sealed off from relating: the speaker points out in the poem that "what she is to me, / a ceremonial form, an intransigent puissant corridor / nothing will intersect…" Thus, "she" to "me" is the difference between a sealed off totality and an opened relational being. The I of the I-You, on the other hand, is about relation before it is about anything else.

[9] There are examples, of course, of myths and stories that think about the world in reductive and highly destructive ways. Robert Bringhurst emphasizes in his essay "Poetry and Thinking" (collected in *Thinking and Singing: Poetry and the Practice of Philosophy*) that "Myths are *theses*, not *beliefs*" (165). He draws a distinction between what he calls "real" myths and "social" myths. Real myths, like culture, are not manmade. Social myths, on the contrary, are closed systems that totalize belief. As Bringhurst points out, "The myth of racial superiority doesn't shine like a flowering apple tree or a star. It isn't poetic" (168).

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